

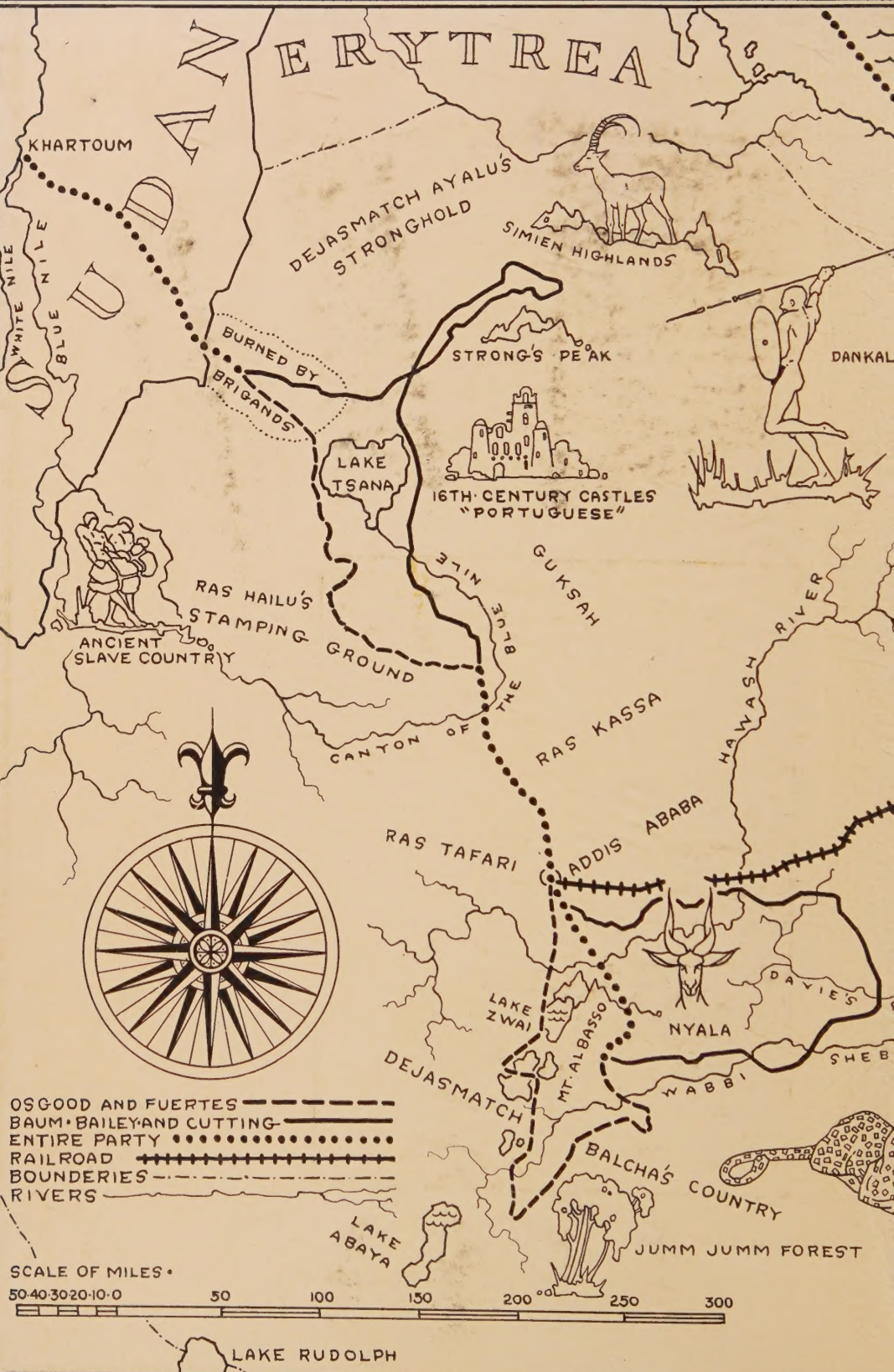
# SAVAGE ABYSSINIA

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James E. Baum









A R A B I A

# ABYSSINIAN EXPEDITION

FOR THE FIELD MUSEUM OF  
NATURAL HISTORY

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*Savage  
Abyssinia*



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INTO THE UNKNOWN COUNTRY



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# Savage Abyssinia

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*By*

JAMES E. BAUM

Of The Field Museum Abyssinian Expedition



With Illustrations  
from Original Photographs

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*Publishers - New York*

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To the Memory of  
LOUIS AGASSIZ FUERTES

*"His life was gentle, and the elements  
So mixed in him, that Nature might stand up  
And say to all the world, 'This was a man!'"*





## PREFACE

LOUIS AGASSIZ FUERTES of Cornell University and I, had conceived the idea of an expedition to Abyssinia for the purpose of collecting museum specimens; mammals and birds.

We called upon Dr. Wilfred H. Osgood, curator of mammals of the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, and proposed that the Field Museum organize such an expedition. Dr. Osgood, I remember, was seated at the time in a chair tilted back behind his table. No sooner had we spoken the word "Abyssinia," than the good doctor straightened up with a sudden motion:

"You have hit upon a thing that has been in the back of my head for a great many years." And then, eagerly, like a man suppressing great excitement, he told us things about Abyssinia that we had not known:

"Why! Do you realize how little is known, scientifically, of that section of Africa; how little has been done in the way of exploration? Abyssinia, you know, was the ancient kingdom of Prester John. It was from the Abyssinian highlands that the Queen of Sheba, with a great caravan descended upon her famous visit to King Solomon in the Holy Land. If I have my history correct—the present ruler, Ras Tafari, is a direct descendant of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba." The scientist was started upon a subject intensely interesting and we listened:

"The Ethiopian race is supposed to have sprung from

## Preface

certain tribes of Israelites who, instead of crossing the Red Sea with Moses, elected to migrate southward up the Nile, arriving finally upon the Abyssinian highlands. But aside from its strange historical and ethnological background, Abyssinia is by all odds the most important and interesting part of the world left to be investigated—speaking from a natural history standpoint. Very little—almost nothing—is known of its faunal life. The ancient Abyssinian prejudice against outsiders saw to that! And until the present time that remote country has been almost a closed book. One Ruppell and another, Von Hueglin, I think, Germans, attempted to collect specimens there in 1837. Little could be accomplished, for the natives drove them out. There may have been one or two abortive attempts to study the natural history of Abyssinia since then, but if so, they did not meet with much success; for museums are peculiarly barren of Abyssinian representation. I think, however, that an American expedition to-day, if gone about in the right way—through our State Department—could obtain permission from Ras Tafari to make a thorough study and a valuable collection in his country. If this can be done—I am decidedly for it!”

Mr. D. C. Davies, director of the museum and Mr. Stanley Field, president, agreed with Dr. Osgood. And that same afternoon, in a conversation with Mr. Walter Strong, owner of the *Chicago Daily News*, I repeated what Dr. Osgood had said. Walter Strong at once appreciated the scientific value of such a work and was keenly alive to the interest the general public would take in an exploration trip to a land so little known; a feudalistic country still practicing many barbaric customs of the Dark Ages. His prompt action in the matter was a

## Preface

beautiful example of American business methods. There was no idle questioning as to details; he had confidence in the Field Museum—the details could be entrusted to them:

“The *Chicago Daily News* will be glad to make such an expedition possible. We will arrange the entire financial part of it. The Field Museum may call upon us for the amount at any time.” The thing had been proposed and settled in a day.

Dr. Osgood was placed in command. His experience in South America, Alaska, Central America and Mexico: His service with the United States Biological Survey and his practical knowledge of natural history from a field as well as from a museum standpoint, peculiarly fitted him for the position.

Louis Agassiz Fuertes was to be in charge of the ornithological part of it. His thorough knowledge of the subject, and his studies in color of the birds of North and South America, combined with long and varied experience in the field in many parts of the Western Hemisphere, would make him a decided addition to the personnel.

Alfred M. Bailey, who had recently joined the staff of the Field Museum, was chosen by Dr. Osgood as the third member of the party. A wide experience in field work had been his. The Denver Natural History Museum has some remarkable groups of arctic animals and birds collected by Bailey in a year and a half passed with the Eskimos upon the northernmost tip of Alaska, Point Barrow. He too is an ex-U.S. Biological Survey man and his investigations had taken him from Mexico to the Arctic, from the Bahamas to the remote islands of the Pacific. He had collected most of the larger animals of



## Preface

North America; polar bear, walrus, elk, deer, antelope and moose.

C. Suydam Cutting of New York, sportsman and at one time court tennis champion, recently member of the Simpson-Roosevelt-Field Museum expedition to the Thian Shan mountains of central Asia for the Marco Polo's sheep—*ovis poli*—volunteered to make a moving picture record of the journey. His offer was immediately accepted.

My work, beside that of historian of the expedition, would be to assist in the collecting of larger animals, in which, fortunately, I had had some experience.

Lists of supplies, equipment, ammunition and other necessities used by half a hundred Field Museum expeditions to far places were taken from the museum files. They were a great help in the outfitting. Osgood and Bailey worked at high pressure for months: Things had to be done correctly. When the expedition should arrive in Abyssinia there would be no opportunity to replace defective or wrongly chosen material. A few mistakes in the preliminary organization work might easily have meant failure. It was there that Osgood's experience and careful attention to detail proved to be of inestimable value.

Without the permission and coöperation of Ras Tafari, Regent of the Empire, the expedition could never have traveled ten miles outside the capital and I wish to take this occasion to express the thanks of the entire party and of the Field Museum for his thoughtful and unreserved courtesy. He gave us *carte blanche* without qualification.

Colonel D. A. Sandford, of Addis Ababa, was most generous, not only in hospitality, lavish even for out of

## Preface

the way corners of the earth, but in his sound advice and most valuable information; he set us right upon countless points of native etiquette and customs. His judgment upon the details of organizing a caravan could not be beaten: Colonel Sandford, to strangers in a strange country, was "as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

Mr. Charles F. Rey, of London, had lived in Addis Ababa for four years at one time and was back upon a visit when we arrived. His friendship with Ras Tafari and his deep study of native customs and withal his frank and open comradeship in offering advice and information was most fortunate and proved of the greatest benefit to the expedition. Mr. Rey is the only living man who has made a complete study of the Amharic language, Abyssinian history and ethnology—as his book, *UNCONQUERED ABYSSINIA*, so ably proves. We are much indebted to him.

JAMES E. BAUM.





# CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE . . . . .	vii
HISTORICAL NOTE . . . . .	xvii
 CHAPTER	
I. FITTING OUT AT THE CAPITAL . . . . .	1
II. ADDIS ABABA . . . . .	17
III. RAS TAFARI . . . . .	39
IV. COMMON CUSTOMS . . . . .	59
V. CLIMATE, PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY, RIVERS, RESOURCES . . . . .	87
VI. SHIFTAS—DIFFICULTIES OF TRAVEL . . . . .	107
VII. TREKKING TO THE ARRUSI—NYALA HUNT . . . . .	129
VIII. EASTWARD DOWN THE RIVER WABBI SHE- BELI . . . . .	153
IX. KUDU, GERUNHUK, ZEBRA, ORYX . . . . .	177
X. INTO THE UNKNOWN COUNTRY . . . . .	199
XI. TREKKING TO THE NORTHERN HIGHLANDS . . . . .	225
XII. RAS HAILU . . . . .	241
XIII. DEJASMATCH AYALU . . . . .	271
XIV. IBEX ON THE HEIGHTS OF SIMIEN . . . . .	293
XV. HUNTING THE BIG RAM . . . . .	315
NAMES OF ABYSSINIAN ANIMALS . . . . .	335



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
Into the unknown country . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
Villagers with jugs—A dignified chief—Ashagri, caravan leader . . . . .	2
Dr. Wilfred H. Osgood, leader of the expedition—Priests with their white turbans—Gaily bedizened mules . . . . .	10
Ras Tafari arrives upon the scene—A load of meat—The market place—A lady rides to market . . . .	26
Tafari Makonnen, Emperor of Ethiopia—Better class Abyssinians—The last of a long line of chiefs . . .	50
The story-teller—Christianity as practised in that savage land—Two Galla women not so shy as the others—The debtor is chained to the creditor . .	66
A family at home—Watching his slave plow with wooden stick—Nests of weaver birds—Keeping off wild pigeons . . . . .	82
The River Hawash—A reed boat on Lake Tsana—A wilder part of the country—A beautiful camp site . .	90
Camp on the plateau—A Mohammedan Galla—The Gallas of the lowlands . . . . .	98
The great Arrusi plateau—Death in the woods . . .	114
Galla Shiftas hold up the caravan—The Galla raider is not unhandsome . . . . .	122
Ras Tafari's lion cub—Smoking out wild bees—Hartebeest—Wild Gallas come to have a look at the white men . . . . .	130
Beautiful lyre-shaped horns of the Nyala—As beautiful and graceful as he is rare . . . . .	138
Drying Nyala meat—Remote, mysterious, unknown Africa . . . . .	146
Making camp on a hill—A woody camp under a wild fig tree . . . . .	162
As handsome as he is dangerous—The leopard that almost killed the tent-boy who is now holding him—Carrying the leopard home . . . . .	170



## List of Illustrations

	FACING PAGE
Reedbuck—Bailey and a black bushbuck—An ugly wart hog . . . . .	178
Grevy zebra (wounded)—Skinning the mountain zebra . . . . .	186
A Gerunhuk head—The lesser Kudu is a beautiful animal—The "spook" bull Kudu . . . . .	194
Stanley Field Falls—We named this "The Davies River" . . . . .	202
A pack camel—She had never seen a white man before—A "brave" Galla who went north of the Wabbi . . . . .	210
Allamayu with Kudu—Two fine Oryx heads—Spotted hyena . . . . .	218
A swinging bridge—Garasmach Sallassy—Letter carriers . . . . .	226
Near the headwaters of the Blue Nile—Abyssinian types . . . . .	234
Ras Hailu, the great man of the North—Ras Hailu's daughter, wife of the deposed ruler, Lidj—Priests of the village of Wurk . . . . .	250
Before the chief's quarters—Ras Hailu's body guard—Humped cattle of Gojjam . . . . .	258
In our honor: A raw meat feast—Warriors of Ras Hailu—Raw flesh was the main dish—A weird dance by the slave band . . . . .	266
The horsemen of Dejasmach Ayalu arrive—Horses in parade dress—The vanguard of the chief's great retinue . . . . .	282
Ancient Portuguese castle in the heart of Abyssinia—Dejasmach Ayalu's stronghold . . . . .	290
A landmark to caravans—Tremendous Simien escarpment—Range of the Walia Ibex . . . . .	298
The little dog-faced baboon—A thick-billed raven—Gureza monkey—Big male Gellada . . . . .	306
The Sudan border at last—The Author and Birhano with Ibex . . . . .	330

## HISTORICAL NOTE

THE origin of the Ethiopian or Abyssinian race is buried in that impenetrable haze of mythology that makes the Old Testament such a fascinating study as folk-lore but of so little value historically. There is much controversy upon the subject. The race is probably Hamitic, although some students of the subject claim, Semetic.

The confusion of the names; Ethiopia, Abyssinia, Meroë and Nubia, has greatly clouded the issue and the tangled skein probably never will be unraveled. It is quite possible that the region which we know as Abyssinia was settled some five thousand years ago; whether by invaders from the wastes of Arabia or from the north and west of Africa is an undetermined question. There is little doubt that at one time Arabia and Abyssinia were governed by a common sovereign. On the other hand it is admitted that an Ethiopian dynasty once ruled in Egypt.

About the year one thousand B.C., Makeda, the Queen of Sheba, is supposed to have descended from the Abyssinian highlands and to have visited Solomon at Jerusalem. The result of that meeting was a son, Menelik I, who, according to Abyssinian claims, was educated at the court of his father until, at the age of eighteen, he returned to the plateaus of his mother's country. Abyssinian records attempt to prove that Menelik, through a trick of substitution, brought to Abyssinia the Ark of the Covenant containing Moses' Tables of the Law. The

## Historical Note

tradition has it that Menelik, after substituting copies of the famous tables, set out with his retinue carrying the originals. The substitution was discovered. Cavalry was sent in pursuit. Menelik and his retainers were harried to the shores of the Red Sea. But when all seemed lost the ground suddenly opened, Menelik and his followers with the Ark found themselves in an underground passageway that led beneath the Red Sea. They emerged somewhere in the vicinity of Axum in Abyssinia. But unfortunately, before the Ark could be hauled from the subterranean route, a huge stone fell across the opening leaving the Ark and its tablets buried, where, in the firm belief of Abyssinian priests, it rests to-day.

Until the Abyssinians were converted to Christianity in 330 A.D. their history is more mythological than authentic. And it would be best perhaps, to treat it as such and to admit that the ancestors of the present Abyssinians are unknown; buried in the mists and fogs of antiquity.

Yemen, the Red Sea province of Arabia, was conquered by the Abyssinians who ruled that turbulent country until 570 A.D. About the year of Mahomet's birth, they were defeated before Mecca and driven, bag and baggage, forever from the continent of Asia; in spite of an alliance formed, during their conquering years in Arabia, with the Roman emperor, Justinian.

A revolt of the Falasha, or Jewish element, in 950 A.D. occurred—for Abyssinia had been penetrated by large numbers of Jewish traders after the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon. The royal family, with a single exception, were murdered and the Falasha ruled for the next forty years.

For three centuries thereafter a powerful Abyssinian



## Historical Note

chief called Zagues, and his descendents ruled the country. But during that period the direct Solomonian line continued to govern in the large province of Shoa and in 1260 the Shoan king took over the reins of government and the entire country was again ruled by a single sovereign. About this time the Moslem attacks began. Invasian after invasion occurred and the wild followers of the Prophet harried the borders along the Red Sea coast and the western frontier. Abyssinia was successful in repelling the Mo'hammedan fanatics until, in the sixteenth century, the Turks and Arabs under Mohammed Gran, sometimes called the Attila of Africa, attacked the Abyssinians. The Moslem hordes were armed with guns against which the native spearmen were at great disadvantage. Mohammed Gran ravaged the country, burned villages, tortured the inhabitants; the scimitar in one hand—the Koran in the other—conquering province after province. King Lebna Dengal was hunted like a wild beast. Christianity seemed doomed in Africa.

At this critical time a Portuguese embassy arrived. They remained for six years and returned to Portugal with highly colorful reports of the devastation wrought by the Moslems and the imminent danger to the Christianity of Abyssinia. The gallant Dom Christoforo da Gama, brother of the great navigator, with four hundred and fifty musketeers landed at Massowa on the Red Sea to "aid and succor" the embattled Abyssinians. Da Gama allied himself with the Amharic chiefs but the next year was killed by Gran and his men. The Abyssinians and Portuguese under King Galaoudeous revenged his death promptly by slaying Mohammed Gran.

Abyssinia was next called upon to resist the invasion

[xix]

## Historical Note

of an African race—the Gallas. These savages were defeated, many of them enslaved and great numbers settled in the more inhospitable parts of the country where their descendants live to-day. Portuguese Jesuits had been entering the ancient kingdom of the Queen of Sheba in large numbers but became too persistent in their efforts to alter the Abyssinian brand of Christianity and were expelled and the country closed to Europeans.

In 1813 the kingdom broke up under separate chiefs and six kings ruled the different provinces until the middle of the nineteenth century. European nations became interested in this valuable plateau land. Trade treaties were signed by the British and French. About this time, a bandit, Kassa, obtained control, defeating most provinces. He was crowned king, taking the name Theodore. But Sahala Mariam, son of the king of Shoa, revolted. While this defection was going on Theodore became arrogant, sent insulting messages to England and imprisoned British officers and clergy. Lord Napier was sent at the head of an expedition in 1867–8 to compel the liberation of the prisoners. Magdalla, the stronghold of Theodore, was captured and the king committed suicide.

After the British retired Ras Karsa subdued the country and was crowned, taking the name Johannes. But Menelik II, king of Shoa, refused to recognize his authority and the two rulers girded for battle. A compromise was arrived at however, Menelik was acknowledged to be king of Shoa and Karsa ruler of the rest of Abyssinia. But Karsa's son died and Karsa was killed by the dervishes. Menelik immediately assumed the reins. He consolidated Abyssinia as it is to-day, put down an uprising of Gallas and added their territories, greatly extending the boundaries of his country.

## Historical Note

In 1896 the Italians sent an army of fourteen thousand men to invade Abyssinia and establish a protectorate over the country. Menelik gathered his warriors to the number of one hundred and twenty thousand, met the invaders at Addua in the north, defeated and dispersed them. Not more than four thousand Italians ever reached their own country.

The weak boy king, Lidj Yasu, became Menelik's successor in 1908, when that efficient ruler suffered a stroke. After Menelik's death, 1913, Lidj Yasu became active in supporting the cause of the Mad Mullah, in British Somaliland. He was known to have decided Moham-medan leanings and for this reason was deposed by the combined forces of Ras Tafari, Hopta Giorgis and the present empress Zauditu, a daughter of Menelik. The empress Zauditu and Ras Tafari Makonnen jointly assumed the power by agreement of the powerful Rassés.





# Savage Abyssinia

## CHAPTER I

### FITTING OUT AT THE CAPITAL

THOUGHTS of happy days, long ago, upon the elevated plains of Wyoming and New Mexico had taken complete possession of my mind. The cool wind of late afternoon blowing in through the open car window and the pleasant vista of rolling, grassy prairies—the tawny Abyssinian plateau, had combined to form an illusion; and I could not shake off the feeling that this wide countryside was a panorama in Western America. Unconsciously, I half expected a careless, jaunty centaur, booted and spurred, wide hat atilt at the correct cowboy angle, to come jogging over the hills, spur his broncho playfully in the shoulder and give the passengers an exhibition of clever horsemanship in the most approved Western style.

Instead, a black Abyssinian astride a white pony dashed swiftly alongside, keeping pace with the slow,

[ 1 ]

## Savage Abyssinia

jerky train. His loose shamma trailed in the wind. Round rhinoceros hide shield sat solidly upon the left forearm. A curved scimitar of prodigious length clattered and rattled against the galloping horse's side. The big toe of each bare foot was thrust into small toe-stirrup and the rider sat loosely in the high-cantled Abyssinian saddle; a wild, barbaric figure.

He drew close to the moving train and as he did so, black, woolly heads popped out of car windows. Tongues wagged and it was plain that a barrage of jocular criticism was being hurled at the stranger. But he took himself far too seriously to enter into the spirit of the occasion. The frown upon his face became more pronounced. He shook his left arm threateningly and the shield glittered in the sunlight. The hecklers redoubled their efforts from the safety of car windows. The horseman thumped his mount in the ribs with bare heels and grew vociferous, and the recriminations on both sides became feverish. The train had gained momentum and the little horse was now running his best, neck outstretched, hoofs pounding the sun-baked earth in wild tattoo. Reckless with anger, the rider paid no attention to the ground ahead which became rocky and dangerous. The straining horse put foot upon a loose stone and faltered in its stride. The girth parted. Saddle and rider shot over the horse's head and came down



VILLAGERS WITH JUGS



ASHAGRI, CARAVAN LEADER



A DIGNIFIED CHIEF





## Fitting Out at the Capital

in a heap; sword, saddle, shield, flapping white shamma, black arms and legs tangled together in a cloud of yellow dust. The car window audience loudly voiced joyful approval. The train sped on around a curve and the incident was closed. A half hour later we pulled into the station at Addis Ababa, the capital of Abyssinia; barbaric feudal kingdom of African highlanders.

A vast throng surrounded the cars. A perfect babel of sound filled the air. Every one in that immense crowd seemed to have something important to say. All classes and conditions of Abyssinian society were represented. Priests, crowned with the white turbans of their office, chiefs, grandees, wearing over white cotton shammas the high-peaked parkay-like burnous of black wool, curved scimitars trailing from hips, stood barefooted upon the platform. Slaves, several shades blacker, remained at a respectful distance, while over the heads of the motley aggregation, in a large enclosure near the track, could be seen a hundred or more saddle mules and riding horses, caparisoned with high-cantled saddles, bridles heavy with silver and martingales embossed with brass trimmings. At each animal's head stood a syce—slave or servant—while a short way off, gun bearers, men-at-arms, retainers and zebanias, awaited the pleasure of their masters.

The excitement of the train's arrival over, digni-

## Savage Abyssinia

fied chiefs stalked to the horse and mule enclosure where each mounted from the right side, American Indian fashion, and set off briskly up the dirt road toward the main part of the city, surrounded by his own particular crowd of trotting retainers.

Our arrival in Addis Ababa marked the end of a long journey and the beginning of another to be still longer. It had taken almost a month of continuous travel to reach Addis. But upon arrival, thanks to Osgood's foresight, the expedition was superbly equipped. And unlike most African expeditions this one had to be prepared not only for the intense heat of lowlands near the Equator but also had to include things suitable for the cold of high plateaus and mountain ranges. Although lying almost under the Equator, the 13,000 and 14,000 foot mountains of the ancient kingdom of Prester John are, at certain seasons, intensely cold. And two of the main objects of the expedition were to secure—if possible—habitat groups of mountain nyala (*tragelaphus buxtoniensis*), (sometimes called the Buxton Kudu) which is exceedingly rare and is found nowhere in the world but upon three mountains in Abyssinia—and the Walia Ibex (*capra walia*), an inhabitant of the stupendous cliffs of the high Simien. Like the nyala, the walia ibex exists nowhere but in one restricted locality in Abyssinia. The hunt for these two animals would be certain to

## Fitting Out at the Capital

lead us into wild, elevated regions where temperatures at night or upon cloudy days would be well below the freezing point.

The habitats of these two important animals lie in widely separated parts of the country. The restricted range of the nyala is some hundred and twenty miles south of Addis Ababa, while that of the walia is about four hundred north. That meant at least two separate and distinct journeys.

From the meager information obtainable, the trip to the south after nyala appeared to be the easier of the two. The country to be crossed, while dry and deserty for long stretches, was not so cut up with deep canyons and high escarpments as the terrain on the route to the northern highlands. For that reason we planned to make our southern trip for nyala first, after which we would return to Addis Ababa, replenish stores, replace worn-out pack mules and ship the specimens obtained to the Museum.—Then set out upon the northern trip for walia ibex.

One of the most important things that had to be done upon arrival in the Abyssinian capital was to secure a competent headman. In a place like Addis Ababa where there are few Europeans and almost none who has had much experience on trek it was difficult to get first hand information, not only about the outlying parts of the country but also upon the

## Savage Abyssinia

reliability and trustworthiness of the men who came to offer their services as chief of caravan.

We were strongly advised to employ about equal numbers of Christians and Mohammedans. It was explained that men of the two religions, while friendly enough to get along without trouble, would never become close enough to combine against their employers: There would thus be two distinct factions—one of which, in case of serious misunderstanding, would be almost certain to side with us.

We hired a Mussulman, Mohammed Tooyah, as chief packer. It would be his duty to handle the mule men and superintend the transport. He had come highly recommended and seemed to take hold in the preliminary preparations in a substantial and intelligent way. A Christian, Ashagri, was to be a sort of second headman, ranking with Mohammed. He came without recommendation but won his position by constant and never failing good nature and willingness. In appearance he was a story book pirate: short and stocky, black-bearded; wearing a battered sun helmet that some one had given him. Ancient leather puttees strapped to dusky shanks above bare feet and an immense belt filled with old lead cartridges of half a dozen calibers, none of which would fit any gun in camp, lent him an air of reckless bravado. You expected him momentarily to break into the old chant "Fifteen men

## Fitting Out at the Capital

on the dead man's chest." Ashagri had been at one time a corporal in Ras Tafari's army. He was imbued with a powerful, if somewhat comic opera, spirit of militarism and would spring to attention and snap into a salute upon the approach of any member of the expedition.

Ashagri's worst fault was his habit of haranguing his men upon every occasion. In fact, the most unpleasant trait of Abyssinian character is the practice of useless talk. They delight in arguments and will drop whatever they happen to be doing to take part in any senseless wrangle going on near by. This miserable habit is a positive vice and there is only one way to combat the evil and keep from becoming involved yourself—refuse to discuss the subject in question, give orders and demand that they be carried out immediately without the advancement of counter suggestions.

I remember in one of the first camps we made on the trail, an entire afternoon, after the tents had been pitched, was given up to a trial. Every Abyssinian took part. Ashagri, seated upon a chop box, fanning himself importantly with his white horse-hair fly switch was the judge. The contending parties had selected two or three vast and powerful talkers as legal counsel. One would take the floor and, standing in the middle of the circle, facing Ashagri, would illustrate his headstrong and rapid



## Savage Abyssinia

words by dramatic arm and hand motions. When he came to a particularly important point of the argument he would accompany his words by the most strenuous gestures. They reminded us of the contortions of a baseball pitcher as he winds up "to put a hot one over the plate."

This particular trial lasted so long and seemed to be of such absorbing interest to the whole camp that we inquired of the interpreter—later—what it had all been about: One of the syces, Zuleka, had lost a decorative but useless black powder cartridge from his belt and thought one of the men must have found it. It is upon just such trivial accounts that the native mind will soar to its most dizzy heights of oratory. Obviously a white man should never allow such childish intelligences to take up his time in discussion.

About 50 mules would be necessary to transport the equipment and supplies. The chop boxes in which most of the food was carried weighed 75 lbs. each and were not too large to pack conveniently one on each side of a mule, but we found later that 150 lbs. was a load somewhat too heavy for the small Abyssinian mule upon a long trip. About 125 lbs. would be better where the pack animal is expected to do steady work day after day in a rough country. Abyssinian pack saddles are built upon the principle of the South American "aparejo" but

## Fitting Out at the Capital

they are poorly made, stuffed with dried grass and a heavy forked stick bound to the front performs the duty of a saddle tree. The whole rig is so flimsy and carelessly made that sore backs must be accepted as inevitable. No cinches are used.

Everything is secured by a rawhide rope passing over the load and under the horse's belly. A clever hitch, something like a double diamond is employed but requires two men to throw. When made fast by men who understand their business, however, it is perhaps one of the best in the world.

It is hard to understand just why the tough rawhide does not cut the animal's belly but no more than two or three of our mules ever developed belly sores from this cause, while at the end, all but a few had sore backs, grading all the way from a slight abrasion made by a tent pole rubbing a hip to the most ghastly raw wounds from which the hide would slough off, leaving the flesh exposed. There seemed to be no way to avoid sore backs with our heavy loads and the pack animals of caravans we passed throughout the country, were invariably in the same condition. It is all very well to start out with the firm resolution never to put a load on a sore backed animal. But this worthy intention will not work out. You find yourself in a wilderness where mules cannot be purchased or hired. You are then left with the alternative of packing a sore

## Savage Abyssinia

backed animal whose condition is absolutely pitiable or leaving behind 100 to 150 lbs. of tents, food, ammunition, photographic supplies, or other equally vital equipment. Although an expedition sets out from Addis Ababa with plenty of mules, it will not be long before so many have become worn out or developed sore backs that it will be necessary to pack every animal.

In most parts of that rough country hyenas are a menace to stock. Of the two varieties; the spotted and the striped, the spotted species is the worst. He is a big, nasty customer and the mules must be picketed to a line in the center of camp at dark. This precaution is hard on mules and is the cause of much of the transport difficulty. It is impossible, more than half the time, to obtain grain and in the wilder sections where natives are few and no grain is raised, pack animals rapidly become exhausted.

It is customary, on an average, to use one packer for each three mules and we did the best we could with the able assistance of Mr. David Hall of Addis Ababa in selecting men for those positions. An unskilled packer is a nuisance, not only in causing sore backs but in having constant trouble with his loads along the trail.

Six Zebanias or camp soldiers were hired. Two of these were on duty at a time during the night. They made the rounds of the camp, kept a fire or



DR. WILFRED H. OSGOOD, LEADER  
OF THE EXPEDITION



PRIESTS WITH THEIR WHITE  
TURBANS



GAILY BEDIZENED MULES





## Fitting Out at the Capital

two going near the mules, and saw that no hyenas raided the picket line. And, being armed, they were useful in impressing local tribesmen.

The interpreter question is most important. English-speaking interpreters are hard to get. They are invariably young men who have acquired a smattering of English in Egypt, the Sudan or the foreign legations at Addis. A young Abyssinian with a little knowledge is sure to be quite set up about it and to consider himself of finer fiber, a breather of a more rarefied atmosphere than his less fortunate compatriots. He will have an exalted idea of his value and his mind will be clouded with theories inconvenient to his employers. Personal rights will hang heavily upon his shoulders. Abyssinians are an unconquered people and consider themselves fully the equal of whites. This conception is more marked in the younger, so-called educated boys, and is apt to be trying at times.

A man who will interpret orders literally, without injecting ideas of his own, who will report verbatim the remarks of village "Shums," or chiefs, who will not alter the directions of local guides regarding the locations of water and game, is a rare and unusual treasure. And if such a man can be found he is worth his salt,—no matter what he costs.

Our first interpreter—Looloo—was an unusually

## Savage Abyssinia

smart boy. He spoke French excellently and, as Suydam Cutting speaks French like a Frenchman, we should have been able to get along with Looloo if he had not been *too* smart. The Abyssinian distrust of Ferengies (as they call Europeans or any one from the outside) was rather over-developed in Looloo. He was absolutely unreliable. His idea of interpreting was to tell what he thought we should hear and nothing else. He had a great weakness for village intrigue and if he could possibly make us believe that water was not to be had for a long distance would do his best to shorten the day's march. A village always fascinated Looloo and he invariably tried hard to have camp pitched as near as possible; a thing to be avoided; very demoralizing to the men. We had to retain him until the end of the first trip, when Looloo, who was smart enough to know how he stood with us, resigned, thereby sidestepping the discharge he so well deserved.

Our plans, before we left home, called for a division of the expedition into two parties, to cover more territory, and therefore the personnel included two interpreters, two cooks, and two headmen.

For three weeks the work of unpacking crates, boxes and bales and putting our outfit in trail condition went on. During that time passes had to be procured from the authorities. The fifty pack mules and a dozen saddle animals, and a force of forty

## Fitting Out at the Capital

men, had to be collected. Organizing a caravan in Addis Ababa is a complicated and long drawn-out affair. Undue haste in purchasing mules at once sends the price considerably higher. They should be purchased two or three at a time, slowly. For the mule market is not inexhaustible and especially at the end of the rainy season, October, when negahdis, professional packers, are preparing for the year's work on the trails, the demand may easily exceed the supply—and then it follows naturally that prices go sky-high.

We turned over the work of purchasing the mules to David Hall, who, in turn sent his man, Kassa, to the mule market. We carefully avoided the place ourselves; our presence would have had an electric effect upon native mule owners; Ferengies are supposed to have mysterious and unlimited drawing accounts. So the mule buying went on quietly and slowly; two or three a day were added to the herd pastured in the large compound behind the hotel. Meanwhile passes were applied for from Ras Tafari. This was done through the proper channels: There is no United States legation in Abyssinia and American business is handled by the British Minister. Such things take time.

While these preparations were going along slowly but steadily we were interviewing applicants for jobs. We tried to exercise the greatest care in the

## Savage Abyssinia

selection of men, for in Abyssinia, men, even the best of them, are hard to handle. We had already seen something of that disagreeable native tendency to argue and wrangle upon every excuse and were perfectly aware that a caravan, such as ours, that intended to be out six months and was to enter regions where white men had never been, spending practically all its time off the main caravan routes in wild country where local natives might be dangerous, must have an exceptional personnel. Caravans have left Addis upon more than one occasion, and have been forced to return to the capital—defeated because the men refused to go where ordered or because there were, in the organization, trouble-makers and malcontents.

The first question we put to applicants gathered in the hotel compound each morning, was: "Are you willing to go anywhere in Abyssinia?" Some were and some were not. Those who hesitated were lost: they were not considered. Recommendations, chits from former employers, as a rule, meant little. If David Hall knew them personally, knew their records and vouched for them, that was usually enough. But the Anglo-Saxon standard of honesty does not prevail among Abyssinians. This was brought home to us by a remark of Hall's. We had asked him about a certain man who applied for a job as zebania:

## Fitting Out at the Capital

"Is this fellow honest?" we inquired.

"Oh, yes," said Hall, "he'll prove honest enough. I know because I've just had him in chains six months for stealing. He's sure to be honest for a year or two now."

But while on the point of honesty I must add that some of our men—about half,—proved to be thoroughly honest—men whom you would not hesitate to trust with anything, without reservation. From what we learned in contact with the people and from others of experience in the country—our men were an exceptional lot—a few were positive stars!

The mountain nyala—that rare and beautiful animal of the Kudu family, with its tall lyre shaped horns—was to be our first quest. Exactly where nyala could be found was one of those things in which rumor plays a leading part. A few had been killed years ago and while we knew they were to be found in the Province of Arrusi, we could not acquire much information as to just what part of that vast territory was their stamping ground. The reports of two Englishmen who had been there, were, we thought, the most reliable. They had shot nyala on Mt. Chillalo but the maps for that district were marvelously inexact. Planning the best route to the Chillalo region was something of a job with the meager information at hand. The question had to be studied. Rumors and reports concerning the



## Savage Abyssinia

behavior of certain tribesmen in that country were continually cropping up in Addis. But with a pass from Ras Tafari and a letter from Fitaurari Hopta Giorgis, the chief of Arrusi, we did not anticipate trouble with the inhabitants.

## CHAPTER II

### ADDIS ABABA

**T**HIRTY-ONE years ago, when the great Menelik was king of the Abyssinians, he encamped with his army on the slopes of the Entoto Hills, near the center of his kingdom. A magnificent forest of cedars covered the lower hill-sides and straggled out across the wide plains of the eight thousand foot plateau. Menelik remained in this delightful spot for many days, recruiting his army for the advance against the invading Italians, striking inland from the Red Sea. The warrior king was so impressed with the place that he vowed to return and build a new capital upon those pleasant hills if he should be successful in the forthcoming expedition. He kept his vow. After the invaders had been defeated and routed, Menelik returned with his wild, barbarian army, set them to work and in an incredibly short time thousands of mud-plastered, grass-roofed tukuls were scattered about through the cedar forest. The new capital had been established. He called it Addis Ababa—the New Flower.

As usually happens in Abyssinia, the forest rap-

## Savage Abyssinia

idly became a barren waste of stumps—an unsightly spectacle of scarred hillsides and denuded ravines. But Menelik, unlike his predecessors, did not move when firewood and building material became scarce. He had imagination, for he was no ordinary man. Eucalyptus trees, the Blue Gum of Australia, were imported and planted by the thousand and the undisciplined warriors were forbidden to cut them down. And to-day, as the traveler approaches the capital over the wide plains, tawny and yellow with dry grass, he sees in the distance what appears to be a vast forest of noble trees, dark and somber against the light background of the Entoto Hills. If the day happens to be windless, myriads of tiny smoke columns rise straight above the tall trees as if that far flung forest were still the camping ground of the victorious horde of the emperor Menelik and those rising columns, the smoke of a thousand mess fires climbing to the zenith.

Upon closer approach several buildings stand out prominently: the Queen's gibbi, or palace, and the government buildings crowning a steep hill in the center of town. The unsightly, corrugated roofs of Indian and Arab traders come into view and at last the scattered mud tukuls of the common people extending for miles in clusters and groups, while between, are uninhabited expanses of forest. For Addis Ababa is, in truth, a forest town. Trails and

## Addis Ababa

footpaths wind everywhere through the woods, without apparent rime or reason. In the center of the city are several wide and dusty streets, leading from the market place to the government buildings and radiating from the Queen's palace. Along these stand the hideous tin roofed buildings of the traders. A few automobiles have followed tin roofs and the town is passing through a transition stage that is not attractive. The population is estimated to be around seventy thousand.

White shamma'ed, barefooted throngs crowd the main thoroughfares. Camel trains, loaded with stone for the foundations of a new building turn aside for the automobile of one of the foreign legations. Pack mules and pack burros, loaded with hides or firewood, push through the crowds. But the market place is the scene of greatest activity. Crude shelters against the sun are erected everywhere on the rocky market square. Beneath these crowd men, women, children and dogs: Abyssinians, Indians, Arabs and Gallas. The bickering and wrangling that goes on in such a place is beyond description and no piece of business—however small—is transacted, no article purchased—be it nothing more than a carved wooden ear-spoon—without a half hour's inane argument.

The only coin in general use is the Maria Theresa dollar, worth, usually, about fifty cents, Ameri-

## Savage Abyssinia

can. Piastres, ten to the dollar, are taken in Addis and in some of the southern provinces, but not in the north country. There, bars of rock salt, fifteen to eighteen inches long and three or four in width and thickness pass as money, four to the dollar. Everywhere in the outlying sections, brass cartridges of any calibre are good, being worth about a half dollar each, for every Abyssinian who can afford them wears a cartridge belt containing shells or at least empty brass cases. Cartridges might, without a stretch of the imagination, be termed Abyssinian jewelry.

The Menelik dollar, a coin introduced in recent years, is not accepted outside the capital and the Maria Theresas must be dated 1780 or they are not good in the opinion of the natives. These coins are minted somewhere in Europe especially for the Abyssinian trade and are all dated 1780.

Fuel, in the form of brushwood and dry cakes of cow dung is one of the big items of native commerce. Fuel is scarce and the inhabitants are not allowed to cut down and utilize the eucalyptus trees. Knives, cotton goods, used in making the native shammas, glass beads and brightly decorated leather cartridge belts, horsehair fly switches, salt and tef —(a variety of native grain)—form perhaps the leading articles of retail trade. In another section of the city, the horse and mule market is held every



## Addis Ababa

Saturday. There is always a ready sale for mules in Abyssinia. Mules are worth more than horses for the Abyssinian horse is a small, poorly bred animal, of little stamina. The mules are also small but endure better the steep rocky trails of that rough country.

Queen Zauditu's gibbi is rather an unsightly mixture of Oriental, African and European architecture and is, of course, surrounded by defensive walls of stone. The courtyards swarm with guards and crowds of men squatting on the ground apparently doing nothing. Upon the same hill stand the government buildings with the reception hall of Ras Tafari, Prince Regent. Thousands of men idle in the courtyards here also. Numbers of saddle mules belonging to chiefs and surrounded by the owner's private following add a touch of barbaric color to the scene, for riding animals are always gayly arrayed: A red or yellow cover is usually thrown over the animal, reaching from ears to fetlocks when the rider has dismounted.

All day, streams of people are entering and leaving the main gate: chiefs, confidential advisers and important messengers from outlying provinces call upon the Ras: The political life of the country centers around the gibbis of the joint rulers. For Abyssinia is governed by two distinct factions: Queen Zauditu, the daughter of Menelik, repre-

## Savage Abyssinia

sents the old, reactionary anti-foreign crowd. The Queen and her supporters are bitterly opposed to everything new and foreign. Schools, education, progress, are anathema to them. Ras Tafari Makonnen is the champion of the younger generation. If he had complete, unchallenged control, his country would make rapid strides toward real civilization. He has been instrumental in establishing hospitals, improving streets in the capital and instituting reforms. He has under way at present a pipe line system for bringing water from the Entoto Hills into the city; for there never has been a pure water supply. The inhabitants obtain water for drinking and cooking purposes from wells and two or three streams that flow through the town. But as these are primarily used for the washing of shmmas and other clothing, the drinking water problem is a serious one.

We had been in Addis about two weeks before we had an opportunity to learn something of the domestic arrangements of the better class Abyssinian. Balata Herui, confidential adviser to Ras Tafari, in the capacity of Foreign Minister—a man who might be termed the Colonel House of Abyssinia—called and invited us to luncheon at his home. Small and rotund, dressed in the softest and cleanest of white shmmas, with his closely cropped beard, he was typical of the Abyssinian grandee.

## Addis Ababa

And Balata Herui is the last word in politeness. Quiet, unassuming for one in his high position, we found him one of the hardest men to talk to we had ever met.

His residence stands upon a hill some two miles from the heart of the city surrounded by acres and acres of ground, in a grove of tall, slim eucalyptus trees and, immediately in front, a neat flower garden. Our host met us at the steps and we saw that the frame house had been built in the native round style—an outgrowth of the tukul, or straw-thatched hut used by the poorer classes.

The floors were of hewn timber and the chairs, tables and couches had been made by hand with an ax and bound with rawhide thongs. Furniture so fashioned does not sound comfortable but this was. It had none of the dressed-up appearance so common with most of our store furniture. Instead, it lent to the room an air of substantial, age-resisting utility; solid, serviceable and strong. It was the sort of furniture you would have in a big California ranch if you knew any one who could make it.

An interpreter was brought in at once. Our host introduced his wife, two young daughters, and three small grandchildren of whom he was very proud, as grandparents are the world over. As we sat down in the small dining-room a window opened

## Savage Abyssinia

behind the host. The meal had been cooked either in the yard outside or in an outdoor kitchen, and a servant handed through the window, dishes and platters of Abyssinian food. The only European dish served was sardines; considered a great delicacy in a country where rivers are few and far between. The cooking, I should say, was like that of Mexico or Spain. Native bread is not unlike the tortilla of Mexico and the meat dishes were hot, like chili-con-carne.

In his own home our host became more talkative. He was curious about the Great War and asked many questions about the fighting methods of the different armies. During the conversation we happened to mention that American and European generals no longer lead their men personally, and further, that the war had shown what a mistake it is, even for under-officers, to appear prominently in front of their men: that captains and lieutenants go into an engagement with all distinguishing marks of rank removed. We tried to make clear the reason—that if such precautions were not taken, snipers and sharpshooters would pick them off so rapidly that in a short time the army would be without officers. Balata Herui had not approved of the use of trenches earlier in the discussion and now he was plainly disgusted. He told proudly of Menelik, and the aged war chief, Hopta Giorgis, at the battle

## Addis Ababa

of Addua—how they had plunged in at the head of their men, gallantly, superbly.

“If Abyssinian chiefs did not lead their men,” he stated, emphatically, “they would be disgraced. Their own followers would shoot them down for cowards and traitors. No, your way would never do for us.”

It is not surprising that even one so high in the councils of his country should know so little of modern warfare. The only wars the Abyssinians have ever “enjoyed” have been catch-as-catch-can skirmishes against Arabs or savage tribes—the successful campaign against the invading Italians in 1896 cannot be termed a taste of modern warfare by any stretch of the imagination: the science of war as carried on in modern times is beyond their comprehension. If Abyssinia should be called upon to defend herself against an invading European army to-day, an army with artillery, machine guns, airplanes, the result would be a most dismal surprise to every Abyssinian left alive, from the highest to the lowest—with the possible exception of Ras Tafari.

Our first trip would take us through the Arrusi country, owned and administered by the Fitaurari Hopta Giorgis, commander in chief of the army, and right bower of the Queen’s reactionary party. Fitaurari means—leader of the advance guard. It



## Savage Abyssinia

would not have been well to enter his domains without a personal letter from him. Ras Tafari's passes would perhaps have been protection enough but we should have met with a spirit of suspicion and distrust and things might not have turned out as well as we hoped. Therefore we called upon the eighty-one year old war chief at his fortified home in Addis Ababa—and it was one of the most interesting experiences we had in the capital.

Upon a steep hill, about two miles from the government buildings, stood the stronghold of the aged fighter. We passed through thick stone walls, three of them, fifteen feet in height with platforms for riflemen running along the inside and narrow ports through which to shoot. Massive gates of ancient cedar, studded and reinforced with iron swung open, for we had sent word of our coming. A squad of guards at each gate saluted as we entered. The several courtyards were crowded with warriors, all armed with the old black-powder guns in general use in Abyssinia. Long curved scimitars were much in evidence, swinging from many a hip and trailing almost to the ground. But we noticed that the individuals of the great armed throng were not squatting on the ground as those at the government buildings had been: they were alert, wide-awake and keen.

We were met by a tall person of some rank who



RAS TAFARI ARRIVES UPON THE SCENE



THE MARKET PLACE



A LOAD OF MEAT



A LADY RIDES TO MARKET



## Addis Ababa

led the way without an instant's delay through a port—a low opening in the inner wall, and on through a doorway into an immense room with heavy square beams bracing the walls. It had no ceiling, the walls continued up two stories joining the roof of cedar poles and thatch. It looked like the stables of an old French barn. There was no furniture of any sort: This was one of the barracks of the fitaurari's body-guard. The warriors slept on the hard dirt floor; accouterments were piled against the walls. Our guide led the way through another high, barnlike chamber and ushered us into the presence of the commander-in-chief of the Abyssinian army.

Hopta Giorgis evidently believed in comfort according to Spartan ideas, and what his soldiers endured, he himself accepted as a matter of course. The only piece of furniture in the spacious apartment in which he lay ill upon his native couch, was the couch itself. The two windows in the thick stone walls were high, near the roof and the light filtering through those narrow openings gave the effect of dim twilight. A few chiefs stood by the bedside and two secretaries or personal assistants were at the head. As we entered they raised the old man and propped him up. He was ghastly ashen and, we could see, very ill. But that eagle-like, high-nosed face, although it showed plainly the ravages

## Savage Abyssinia

of pain and physical weakness, had nothing in it suggestive of surrender. I have seldom seen a more indomitable face. The mouth was a thin, straight line: chin prominent, cheek bones high and in his present illness the skin was stretched tightly over these having the look of parchment. He turned to us with a sort of glare that may have been nothing more than the feverish stare of a very sick man but it made us uncomfortable: I felt that I knew what was running through his suspicious mind: "So you are Ferengies from a 'civilized' and powerful country. Whites—you would like to take our country from us because we are—not white!"

He did not speak but waited for us to open the conversation. We had brought our own interpreter and began by expressing sympathy for him in his present illness—an illness which afterward proved fatal—but he did not answer. He waved sympathy aside as of not the slightest moment and, disdaining the usual roundabout, Oriental palaver and small talk, shot out metallically, like the clicking of the mechanism of a machine gun:

"You have come to my country to hunt. You wish to travel through my territory of Arrusi. Is this true?"

The voice was hard, his eyes searched our faces.

We assured him it was and he spoke rapidly in Amharic to an assistant. The man left the room



## Addis Ababa

on the run. Hopta Giorgis turned to the interpreter:

"I have sent him to prepare your letter for the trail. My people in the Arrusi will be ordered to give you every assistance."

He stopped, waiting for us to say something. We began the usual inane remarks:

"We are much obliged for your help . . ."

He interrupted, waving an arm that seemed to brush aside all non-essentials:

"Is there anything more you would like me to do?"

We assured him there was not and we knew, somehow, that he was through with us—that the interview was closed. It was quite clear that he wanted nothing more to do with foreigners than was absolutely necessary. He didn't trust them and made no bones about it. There was not the slightest trace of the hypocrite in the old leader of Mene-lik's advance guard. The backbone of the Queen's party, the anti-foreign, reactionary group, he was the spirit of darkest Abyssinia incarnate. One may not agree with his ideas—his refusal, on religious grounds, to permit an airplane to enter the country, for example—but no one who had met him could help but admire his straightforward steadfastness, his loyalty to the daughter of his old chief and his unbending adherence, through thick and thin, to the

## Savage Abyssinia

ancient traditions of his people. And no one could leave his presence without being impressed with the intangible spirit of power and straight-shooting honesty that seemed to radiate from the man. His was by far the strongest personality we met in Abyssinia.

A majority of the people, like Hopta Giorgis, cling to the traditions of their fathers, strange and bizarre as they are: a minor chief proceeding along the streets of Addis Ababa followed by twenty, thirty or forty retainers and men-at-arms, mounted upon his quick-stepping mule, red saddle cloth flapping in the wind, accouterments jingling, is a sight that calls to mind the old chronicles of the Middle Ages. The slave boy, trotting at the right side of his master's mule, gun in bright satin case over his shoulder, is an important part of the colorful procession. Loud cries of "Zourban! zourban!" (Out of the way! Out of the way!) resound ahead of the fast moving chief and his crowd.

A leper squatting by the roadside draws back the stumps of his legs and peers from eyes almost sightless in a face that is no longer a face. Pi-dogs, hairless from mange and limpy from the effects of well aimed stones, saunter by, or lounge in herds in front of the butcher shops of Hindu traders. The vast population of cur dogs that infests Addis Ababa is due largely to the Hindus whose religion

## Addis Ababa

forbids the killing of any animal. It is their influence with Ras Tafari that prevents the wholesale slaying of the pests. The dogs eke out a precarious existence, foraging in droves through the streets and alleys after dark. And the night sounds of Addis are beyond belief: mules bray, camels grunt, hyenas roar and the pariah dogs take possession of the city.

About two o'clock of our first night in Addis, a prowling hyena at the outer edge of town let out a long howl—about as long as a well rope. There may have been a peculiar intonation to that howl that carried with it something highly insulting to canines. Hyena howls are of nightly occurrence around Addis but that hyena brought down the house instantly. From every quarter of town came answering yelps. Thousands of wandering pi-dogs turned muzzles to the stars and bayed the Southern Cross as if hopes of heaven depended upon it. A comparatively small brigade—about fifty—in a clump of eucalyptus trees to the West, carried the air for the first five minutes, but they were short-winded and their music soon died out in a wavering off key jumble of flats and minors. You could tell, from the last notes of abysmal disappointment, that they hated to give up: But they were clearly out-voiced by the main chorus from the heart of the city. There seemed to be myriads of those four-

## Savage Abyssinia

footed songsters and the way they leaped into the arena, vocally, was astounding. The chorus rose triumphantly to the shivering stars. It swelled and ululated, slid down a few notes, and took on a threatening character. The howls rose and fell, beseeching, imploring, and moaning like souls in purgatory, and as the main chorus sank to minors and dying calf-notes, we thought that here at last was the end. But another section, a part of the main canine army that had been silently getting its wind, surged back into the contest and the thing continued until the first streaks of daylight. We understood then why it is unsafe to be abroad in Addis at night without a heavy dog whip.

Before we left Addis, we were fortunate enough to see a fantasia or celebration. It was a jubilation in honor of Ras Tafari's victory over the weak boy-king, Lidj Yasu, in 1916. Reports of that historic battle vary widely but the one which seems to be the most correct, has it that the two contending forces met outside the city, fired one volley from their old black-powder guns, threw the guns away and finished it more to their liking, with scimitars and spears.

At dawn, great throngs were riding out from Addis Ababa to the wide prairie, open and grassy, some two miles from the city, where the pageant was to be held. Europe in the Middle Ages never

## Addis Ababa

witnessed a scene more splendid or more barbaric. The brush of a Maxfield Parrish never painted a landscape more in keeping, a countryside more mythical, remote, dreamy. Misty hills, reaching, it seemed, to infinity, lay to the westward, league after league of them, leading on to the mirages of the Sudan and the burning heat of the Sahara. They were just high enough, those hills, just broken and wild enough to convey that atmosphere of mystery, of something hidden, unexplored and unknown, that sometimes takes possession of the mind when the sun sinks in a stormy sea.

Grouped around the prairielike field were groves of stalwart eucalyptus trees, spaced as if by the hand of an artist: dark, somber, still. They had that indefinable look of haunted sacredness that seems to surround cypress groves in the canvases of old masters; the same slim stateliness, the same dignity. On the crest of a hill to the east stood a round church inclosed by a high stone wall, suitable for defense against overwhelming odds—the Abyssinian style of architecture. A carpet of thick grass covered the field and into the center of that idyllic scene debouched one of the most brilliantly arrayed collections of men and saddle animals that were ever assembled in this or any other age.

Gazing down upon that panorama, you found yourself muttering snatches from the Waverly



## Savage Abyssinia

novels—Barons and Knights, Saracens, Moors, the Holy Grail again became real. The romance of the Crusades became a living thing, for here, before you, was the same bizarre gathering of men and horses that marked the joustings and tournaments of King Arthur. Sumpter mules, bearing the high red leather saddles of Abyssinian grandees, surrounded by men-at-arms, and draped from ears to fetlocks in scarlet satin edged with gold, were led aside as their masters dismounted to join the group surrounding Ras Tafari.

On a hill, perhaps a quarter of a mile to windward, fifty old men sat in a circle, great deep-throated war drums on the ground before them. And as the Prince Regent entered the church, the vibrant throbbing of the drums began. The old men were hidden in the grove that crowned the hill but steadily throughout the morning came that low, ominous booming of war drums, now rising on the wind, now almost inaudible as the breeze changed, but always savage, always threatening. Abyssinian ladies rode into the field on gayly decorated mules, escorted by groups of slaves, male and female. If they cared to dismount, ready hands were there to spread the all-concealing shammas, for, upon an occasion of this sort, the conventions must be strictly observed: and no Abyssinian lady would mount or dismount in plain sight.

## Addis Ababa

His Highness bestrode a fine dun mule. Cloth of gold almost covered the animal. Bridle, saddle, martingale, were of the finest embossed leather, silver mounted and heavy. He arrived upon the field with an escort that would have done credit to Richard Cœur de Lion, and as the escort passed, some riding, some walking, the early sun gleamed from rifle barrels. It shone upon silver-decorated shields of rhinoceros hide and toyed with the scabbards of scimitars five or six feet long, curved and ivory handled.

Ras Tafari stopped and greeted Cutting, Bailey and me, the only outsiders on the field, and then passed on into the church, followed by his great concourse of warriors. We should perhaps have witnessed the services in the church, but the crowd outside, the armed men scattered around the prairie in groups, the saddle animals, the whole barbaric scene was too much—we could not leave it.

On a level space, two lines of men formed, 300 yards long. At the far end, two horsemen, beautifully mounted, raced between. The horseman in the rear, rising high in his stirrups, made a long, straight throw with his spear. The fugitive ahead, twisting like lightning in his saddle, caught the whizzing shaft in midair as it shot past his shoulder. He turned and assumed the rôle of pursuer. This time the cast was wide of the mark, the spear fell

## Savage Abyssinia

to the ground and the crowd laughed and rallied the thrower hugely. More horsemen entered the lists and we saw that all points had been removed from the spears and the thing was only an Abyssinian game.

The empress arrived with an immense throng. Horsemen galloped back and forth, showing off their mounts. Servants, slaves, retainers, gossiped as they held their masters' horses. Dignified chiefs sat in groups talking quietly, black woolen burnouses pulled around their heads. The royal body-guard gave an exhibition drill. Mounted warriors went through complicated evolutions on the dead run. Lepers sat or dragged themselves along on hands and knees. Chief after chief arrived with his armed following until there must have been 10,000 men on the field. Wild, bushy-haired natives from the interior sauntered through the crowd, spear upright in the right hand, thick shield on the left arm. It was a spectacle of celebration such as might have taken place in the year 1200 on the plains of the Holy Land, if the crusaders had been successful in capturing the sepulcher. And as we turned and rode from the field at noon the booming of the war drums still floated down on the wind, restless, throbbing, inspiring.

And we thought with infinite regret of the time, not far distant perhaps, when all this shall change

## Addis Ababa

and Addis Ababa, the capital of that race of unconquered, untamed highlanders, shall become modernized, civilized—and uninteresting as the negro quarter of a commonplace American metropolis.





## CHAPTER III

### RAS TAFARI

**T**AFARI MAKONNEN, Prince Regent,—King of Kings, Conquering Lion of Judah, Emperor of Ethiopia—is not the man that his high sounding titles would lead one to believe. There is nothing leonine about him. There is not the slightest trace of bombast in his make-up. He is only thirty-four years old, a little under medium height with delicate, handsome features and a skin the color of old ivory. His hands and feet are the smallest I have ever seen in a mature man; the fingers are those of an artist. His carriage is graceful and there is an air of quiet dignity, even retiring modesty about this ruler that is unusually winning. Ras Tafari is well educated and speaks French fluently. He has been out of his country upon two occasions; the first trip was to Aden where he was greatly impressed with the sights. Later he made a diplomatic journey to Paris and London; not forgetting, however, to take with him Ras Hailu, ruler of Gojjam, and ten other powerful chiefs whose ambitions during his absence, might possibly have proved too great a temptation to be

## Savage Abyssinia

resisted. He is an indefatigable worker; the affairs of government occupy his time from early morning until sunset and there is not one thing, however small, that has to do with government that he does not attend to personally: It is his job to run that turbulent country and he does not delegate the slightest part of it to others: although he does nothing of importance without the agreement of the Empress.

Ras Tafari's position is perhaps one of the most difficult in the world: He rules by joint agreement of the powerful Rassas and only in conjunction with the Empress Zauditu. But the actual work is all his. She, being a daughter of the national hero, Menelik, and head of the powerful reactionary group, must not be antagonized. The great Rassas must be conciliated. It is hard for a person who has not traveled through Abyssinia to understand the problems the Regent must face. Ras Hailu of Gojjam, Ras Guksah, chief of Amhara, Dejasmach Ayalu, powerful head of Simien, Dejasmach Gabra Salassy of Tigre, and Ras Kassa of Shoa, are supreme lords in the rough highlands of the north country. Far removed from the central authority, thirty to forty days' journey, some of them, they are out of touch—living in a different world from that of Addis Ababa. Hundreds of lesser chiefs rally to their standards, each with his numerous fol-

## Ras Tafari

lowing. In the South it is the same and we heard that Dejasmatch Balcha, anti-foreign, placed in his almost impregnable position of power by Menelik himself, ruling thousands of square miles and no one knows how many subjects with a hand of iron, pays no taxes, no tribute, no share in the upkeep of government. It is common talk that he has been summoned to Addis Ababa upon more than one occasion and has sent back the reply: "If you want me, come down here into Sidamo and get me."

Deep canyons, vast stretches of rough terrain, mountain ranges, rugged, high and difficult, the Blue Nile, impassable for four or five months in the year, separate the northern chiefs from the seat of government. It would perhaps be impossible for Ras Tafari to send an army against any one of them with much likelihood of success. Those enormously strong feudal barons would meet such an invasion on their own ground with hundreds of thousands of fighting men and the chances would be all in favor of the annihilation of the invaders.

And the chiefs have aspirations: One of Dejasmatch Ayalu's leaders remarked to us, naïvely, that his master would like to be ruler of all Abyssinia and he, himself, hoped to live to see it. They are all inordinately proud and must be handled with gloves. Ruling Abyssinia, maintaining peace

## Savage Abyssinia

within its borders, working cheek by jowl with the anti-foreign, anti-everything, but exceedingly stubborn Queen's party, keeping the government clear of entanglements with European countries, three of which would, perhaps, be only too happy to add Abyssinian territory to their holdings along its wide borders, is a position that calls for a diplomatist of the first water. But Ras Tafari has done it successfully for eleven years, since the age of twenty-three; cleverly, gracefully, suavely.

Our first meeting with the ruler of Prester John's old Kingdom was most formal. We presented our credentials and he welcomed us to his country in a reserved—almost frigid manner. He was very much on his dignity. We stated the purposes of our expedition and asked permission to travel through his domains. This was granted and we were advised that our passes for the trail would be forthcoming within the week.

But Ras Tafari in his home was a different man from the regent we had called upon in the official reception hall. He was dignified always but he was also a cordial and engaging host. We arrived at the residence one evening for dinner. At the gateway to the outer stone wall a squad of soldiers stood at attention, rifles at the salute. A bugler blew a call, strange to us and we passed along a roadway bordered by eucalyptus trees. At the inner gate

## Ras Tafari

more guards saluted and at the main entrance two files of soldiers were drawn up. We were ushered in without delay.

It was a formal, diplomatic dinner and twenty others were there before us: most of the foreign legations were represented. Dr. O. W. Pollock, and Mr. Russell and their wives, of the American hospital in Addis—a mission supported largely by Presbyterians in the United States and doing a great work—a surgeon from the Swedish hospital and several Abyssinians high in the councils of the country were there. The drawing room was spacious and done in the best European taste: A large picture of Menelik hung opposite a spirited battle scene from one of Napoleon's campaigns. An auto-graphed photograph of Albert, King of the Belgians, stood on a small table. The Prince of Wales, framed in silver, decorated another. The furniture, draperies, curtains were French.

Tafari Makonnen, seated beside his wife, Waziru Menin, rose as we entered, shaking hands cordially with each guest in turn. Two or three native interpreters circulating about the room made conversation in an assemblage of such widely different languages quite simple. The dinner service was of solid gold mined from the rocks of the Abyssinian mountains and the china bore the crest of Ethiopia—a lion marching with a flag—and the whole affair



## Savage Abyssinia

went off just as any formal dinner might in New York, Paris or London.

We did not come really to know the ruler of Abyssinia until our fourth visit to his home. We had just returned to Addis from our first trek through the southern provinces. Ras Tafari was much interested in our trip; we had passed through country where white men had never been and he was eager to know how we had been received by the natives in the more outlying parts; and what they thought of him.

We did not tell of our reception at an unmapped river—a stream we called Davies River, in honor of D. C. Davies, director of the Field Museum. It would hardly have pleased the Ras to know that in one part of his territories the people would not believe that Menelik was yet dead! And that Tafari Makonnen meant almost nothing to them, for, in this remote quarter, the present ruler is almost unknown—even by name.

We were having tea in the large living room that afternoon and Fuertes showed him some paintings of the birds of Abyssinia, done in camp—but exceedingly well done. The Ras was much impressed, especially by one of a guinea-fowl, so much so, in fact, that he ordered an attendant to bring in a live guinea fowl. He compared the live bird to the picture and gasped at the resemblance—Abyssinian

## Ras Tafari

art is superlatively crude, something on the order of the stiff wooden pictures painted upon tepees by American Indians.

Later, by way of diversion, a small lion cub was brought in and turned loose on the floor—to the great confusion of the Ras's little brown dog that had been romping around the room. The lion was not more than two feet high but stalked about doing his best to imitate a full grown felis leo, growling and showing baby teeth threateningly. Tafari Makonnen was greatly amused at the cub's attempt to be fierce. He caught up the baby lion and growling back at him hissed:

"Tidlik ambassa kufanoo," in a awed tone—fierce big lion—then added as an aside—"tinnish hyah"—little ass.

We were surprised at the interest this busy ruler of a barbarous country showed in the scientific phases of our expedition. He knew little about the birds of his native land but was well posted on the larger animals, and spoke proudly of the nyala: A shum near Mt. Chillalo had recently sent him a pair of nyala horns.

"I am told that nyala exist nowhere in the world but in my country. Is that correct?"

We assured him it was and went on to say that even in the restricted area where they are found, nyala are scarce. We suggested that he do some-

## Savage Abyssinia

thing to protect them: there are no game laws in Abyssinia:

"It will not be long until those noble antelope are wiped out unless you make a law against their hunting by the Arrusi natives. They should never be shot except for scientific purposes."

"That is a good idea," he agreed, "and I will do something of the kind. I understand there is also a large mountain animal in the northern country not found anywhere else in the world?"

"Yes, the Walia ibex. We hope to secure a group of these also for the Field Museum."

Osgood showed a book of views of the interior of the museum with mounted animal groups. The ruler of the Abyssinians was delighted at the lifelike appearance of the specimens. The Greater Kudu group, shot in Somaliland and mounted by the late Carl Akely struck his fancy more than any others:

"Why," he exclaimed, "those animals stand exactly as if they were alive! I don't understand how stuffed skins can be made to appear so lifelike. Now I can see why people are interested in museums. This is a great work you are doing, educational and instructive and I shall be glad to give you every assistance. My country is just beginning to learn about America and it is only right that America should learn about my country. Yes, I shall certainly give you every aid in your work."

## Ras Tafari

Osgood presented three reels of motion picture film showing a typical American City, crowded streets, skyscrapers and street cars—for the Ras has his own projector—Fuertes made him a present of a book of his own painting—"The Birds of North America," and Osgood remarked that those gifts were not exactly what could be called "royal"; that they were inexpensive, small things to present to the ruler of a great country, but they were the only gifts we had brought. Tafari Makonnen flashed a delightful smile:

"The thought you have given to their selection makes them of great value."

A courtier of the gallant days of Francis First could not have said anything neater or more to the point. The Ras impressed us as being extraordinarily clever: He must be, or he never could hold that unenlightened country together.

The slavery question is a ticklish matter and I did not care to bring it up direct with the ruler but was anxious first to know his attitude on the possibility of abolishing the evil. So I approached the subject through one of his very good friends, a man of mixed Abyssinian and German parentage, educated in Europe. It then developed that Ras Tafari is strongly in favor of abolishing slavery throughout the empire. I pointed out that Abyssinia is one of the few countries of the world where the ancient

## Savage Abyssinia

curse of Africa is a recognized thing and that, as long as it continues, Abyssinia will have little consideration from enlightened nations.

He explained that slavery, as carried on in his country, is a benign form; that slaves are frequently as well off as freemen, often being taken into the master's family. This is true. Slaves are not worked hard—there is so little work done in Abyssinia—but I answered that slavery to a Westerner, was just slavery and there are no extenuating circumstances: We think of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and Simon Legree. The Ras thoroughly understood the attitude of America and Europe and agreed that, while the custom in his country is not as black as it has been painted, and while slave-raiding has been for years a capital offense, he is in favor of tearing out the evil, root and branch; as he expressed it:

"The complete abolition of slavery is one of the things nearest my heart." He was familiar with that unhappy period of American history just after the Civil War when millions of slaves were loosed upon the southern states.

"I wish to avoid such a situation in my kingdom. The slaves are entirely ignorant and would have no means of support if suddenly freed. With no means of subsistence they would take to the trails and become shiftas—brigands, and we should have a reign of terror here. If I could work out some plan by



## Ras Tafari

which they could be liberated gradually and given work to do, nothing would please me more."

I had talked the slavery question over with several persons in Addis who have the good of the country at heart and was prepared to offer a suggestion:

"Why don't you invite foreign capital to come to your country, offering thirty to fifty year leases upon tracts of land for the growing of coffee, the raising of cattle, mules, horses, and for mining? You could guarantee foreign concessions large amounts of slave labor and make an arrangement whereby the big slave owners"—some of the Rassas own as many as 15,000—"could lease their slaves to work upon such concessions at a fair wage. One half of which could be given to the slave owner and the other half retained in a Government fund to purchase the slaves' freedom."

According to the tentative plan a slave could earn enough, working at a fair wage, in five years to purchase his freedom. And his master would have received full value for his human property:

"Such a plan should appeal to slaves, to slave owners and to foreign concessionaires. It would accomplish your desire without hardship to any one."

"I am fully prepared to do this," he answered, "and will say that a similar plan has been in my mind for several years. If foreign capital will come here and develop the land some such arrangement

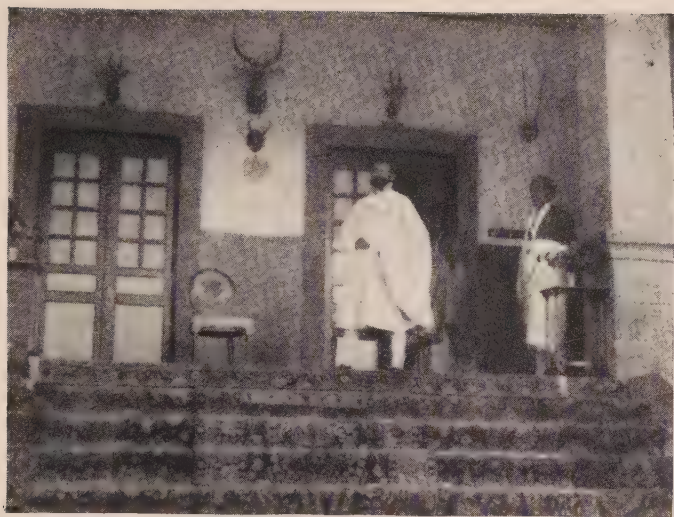
## Savage Abyssinia

can be made. My country is very rich. I am aware that the natural resources have not yet been touched. There is gold, silver, platinum and other minerals. If the natural wealth could in part be utilized to free the slaves without throwing the kingdom into a state of chaos and revolution—I will be only too glad to help.”

But, of course, here crops up the Shankalla in the woodpile. Can he, dare he, make such a move if some of the great Rasses or a powerful section of the reactionary party says—“No”? Is he strong enough to enforce anything upon them that they do not want? I pointed out that if Abyssinia does not make some definite move toward the abolition of slavery and do it soon, a European power might gain the consent and popular backing of the civilized world in a plan to take over and administer that highly desirable country. This danger was put to him in plain terms. He was fully alive to it and the statement came back:

“I am in a position to say that Ethiopia will welcome foreign capital for the development of natural resources and will furnish slave labor to legitimate and worthy concessionaires. We will not allow foreigners to own land but will grant long time leases to proper parties. I agree that the slavery question can best be handled in this way.”

There are some critics of Ras Tafari who would



TAFARI MAKONNEN, EMPEROR OF ETHIOPIA



THE LAST OF A LONG LINE OF  
CHIEFS



BETTER CLASS ABYSSINIANS



## Ras Tafari

say that he is not sincere in those statements and would not go through with them. My impression is he will, only too gladly—if he does not meet with insurmountable obstacles in the way of objection from the powerful Rasses or the Queen's faction. But, he will never endanger the peace of his country for a principle; he has been playing the astute, conciliatory game too long and the Eastern mind has not that Anglo-Saxon "die for a principle" characteristic in its make-up. What he can accomplish remains to be seen.

There is little question that Tafari Makonnen is a humane man. Public hangings used to be the rule until recently. It was a common sight two or three years ago, to see the dried and rattling corpses of evil-doers swinging in the wind from a large wild fig tree in the market place in Addis. But the Regent has done away with such gruesome spectacles. And two persons—a man and a woman—who made an attempt upon his life a short time ago were not executed. Lidgeyasu, the ex-ruler, deposed by Tafari for his flirtations with the Mohammedan church, was not put to death but is kept under guard in an outlying part of the country: Ras Tafari is more lenient than many other monarchs.

The power of the Regent is steadily increasing. A few years ago Tafari Makonnen sat his throne, as one resident of Addis put it; "with his feet under



## Savage Abyssinia

him, ready for a quick move." The reactionary party was actively working for his downfall on the ground of his acknowledged friendship for and desire to coöperate with European nations. That storm was weathered, however, and the Queen's party seems now to understand, at least in a measure, that Tafari has no intention of "giving the country to the Ferengies," and that a concession such as the timber rights allotted to a French company in the south means a real monetary return to the government. And as time goes on Tafari's influence is becoming more and more apparent.

Abyssinia has three thousand miles of frontier bordering colonies of England, France and Italy. The border tribes are far removed from authority and have a weakness for raiding across the line for slaves and ivory. Incipient skirmishes have occurred in recent years and the situation is filled with possibilities. It is one that calls for the greatest tact diplomatically and strong measures where Ras Tafari's own people are concerned. It is difficult for the Regent to impress upon some of the patriarchal Rasses the necessity for strict observance of boundaries. Ras Guksah, Ras Hailu and the Dejasmatch Ayalu, in the north, all have strips of territory bordering the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. From time immemorial it has been the custom of their ancestors to descend into the low countries to the west-

## Ras Tafari

ward for slaves. Slave raiding was, as said before, made a capital offense by the emperor Menelik, but this decree could not put an absolute stop to a custom so ancient and it is whispered that slave caravans occasionally cross the borders in pursuit of "black ivory." We saw nothing of this first hand. The large numbers of slaves are supposed to have been born in the kingdom: Just what proportion actually were home raised is a matter upon which no living man could even guess with any degree of accuracy. The border problem is just another that falls upon the shoulders of the Regent and there is no doubt he has done and is doing all in his power to keep his empire from foreign entanglements on this most dangerous score.

The Ethiopian form of government is a pure example of the old feudal system that gave to Europe during the Middle Ages its romance and color. The Regent is supreme—in theory. The various Rasses owe him fealty and contribute—all except the old Trojan, Balcha—their share toward the expenses of government. The smaller chiefs in turn acknowledge the Rasses and Dejasmatches, overlords of their districts. The common people pay tithes in kind—usually one tenth of what they raise and stand ready to support in war, their immediate chiefs. But the weakness of the system arises from the fact that the people of a province, being answerable to

## Savage Abyssinia

no one but their local chief will follow his lead in anything he undertakes. If one of the big Rassas should rebel against the government every small chief, every village Shum in his territories with his following would trail in behind—for they are his, you might say, body and soul.

An example that showed which way the wind blows occurred when we were passing through Ras Guksah's territory: A customs official refused to honor Ras Tafari's pass, saying "Ras Tafari is nothing to me. My chief is Ras Guksah and you have no letter from him." This affair is given in detail elsewhere.

Ras Tafari, I believe, is trying to do away with the hereditary rulers of provinces and in some places a governor alien to the district has been appointed. This has a salutary effect in strengthening the central government but is a thing that cannot be carried too far—the people are intensely proud of their hereditary chieftains, the ruling family of their province—and Ras Tafari would never dare to supplant such a provincial chief by an outsider. He must wait until the hereditary ruler dies, and then, if conditions are favorable, appoint his own representative as governor instead of allowing the succession to fall to a son of the old chief. And the rulers of provinces have this same problem within their boundaries: The feudal system has wheels within

## Ras Tafari

wheels; as we saw in the case of the Barruhoun family in Ras Guksah's territory:

The Fitaurari Barruhoun had been all his life head of the northwestern part of Ras Guksah's immense holding. He was, of course, a retainer of Ras Guksah and in return for his position of power and trust he was bound to pay tithes and to contribute to his chief in case of need a certain number of warriors. The old Barruhoun died, leaving five sons, the youngest not over ten years of age. The other four were grown men, but, unfortunately, were the result of a union not sanctioned by the church—illegitimate. The youngest, however, was the son of a woman properly married to Barruhoun. Upon the old man's death his four grown sons made a pilgrimage to Ras Guksah at his stronghold, Debra Tabor, accompanied by about two hundred of their people. We passed them en route and they were as peaceful and law-abiding as any one could wish, marching along the trail on the east side of Lake Tsana,—slaves, women and children, warriors, mules and donkeys—a happy and motley crew.

Upon arrival at Debra Tabor, however, they were informed by Ras Guksah that, as they were illegitimate sons, they had no rights and the country ruled by their father would be placed in charge of an outsider until the fifth, the legitimate son, came of age. The four brothers went home, collected the

## Savage Abyssinia

people from their villages and turned shiftas—bandits. And later, when we passed through their country near the Sudan border we found that the entire section had been laid in ashes; villages had been destroyed, the telegraph line to the Sudan was torn down and the poles burned. The whole country, we saw, as we marched through, had been burned for a distance of five days' journey; utterly wasted. The few natives encountered warned us to look out for the Barruhouns; that they had a force of at least five hundred fighting men and would stop at nothing. We passed through their home village of Chilgah, which they had not destroyed; but every able bodied person had left. The grass huts were deserted. A few homeless dogs wandered about and a dozen or two old men and women were the sole inhabitants. Ras Guksah had a real war on his hands. It will be a difficult situation to handle for the Barruhoun stamping ground is fourteen or fifteen days' travel from his headquarters at Debra Tabor. It is a dry, thornbush country, of rough and rugged escarpments, deep valleys and canyons where that lawless, plundering tribe can hold out and fight a devastating guerrilla warfare for years. This is a small scale example of the problems Ras Tafari has to face in attempting to strengthen the central authority by the appointment of his own governors in place of hereditary chiefs: Again, it should be



## Ras Tafari

mentioned, Ras Tafari has one of the most difficult positions in the world.

Menelik once referred to Ethiopia as: "an island of Christians in a sea of pagans." And, after our experience, not only in the capital but upon the trails of the most remote regions of that independent African empire, after having met all kinds and conditions of Abyssinian people we came away with the conviction that Tafari Makonnen is the one island of intelligence in a sea of black, barbarian ignorance.



## CHAPTER IV

### COMMON CUSTOMS

**A**S we stepped off the train at Addis Ababa, Osgood started to elbow through the great crowd to find a customs official. In attempting to pass between two natives he bumped flush into a heavy chain that struck him about the waist. Surprised, he stopped and saw that the ends of the twelve or fifteen foot jingling links were fast to the wrists of the two men. He backed away and walked around. We came to know later that men so chained together were not convicts; merely debtor and creditor linked to prevent the escape of the former and to discourage the latter from Shylock practices. These two chained sportsmen were there to see the train come in and were thoroughly enjoying themselves. The heavy chain bothered them not in the least. But not all debtors and creditors go about in this fashion. As far as we could make out it is left to the discretion of the creditor; if he has reason to believe that the borrower is planning to decamp with the spoils—go into temporary retirement in the hills—he can hale his man before one of the street courts and have the wastrel chained to

## Savage Abyssinia

him. But the chain must not be removed until the debt is paid. This means that the pair remain in bonds for weeks or even months, eating, sleeping and performing all the routines together. But the practice is not common outside the larger towns.

After we had been in the country a few months we began to realize that the Abyssinians themselves do no work. The plowing, cutting of grain with hand sickles, threshing in the ancient Biblical manner—by driving cattle round and round over the piles of cut grain—winnowing, throwing it in the air with a wooden fork so the wind can blow the chaff away—are performed by slaves. And, as such crude farming operations are the beginning and end of all toil there is nothing left for the Abyssinian to do. Female slaves, in the better class families, carry the water, lugging it in big earthen jugs on backs, swaybacked to an amazing degree from long years of it; for the big, heavy jar rests in the small of the back—the buttocks protrude behind forming a sort of shelf, or platform, for the jar to rest upon. A rawhide thong passes from the jug top around the forehead. Water carrying is women's work and I do not remember once seeing a man toting water. There are plenty of burros around the villages in the country and why these are not used as they are in the Sudan for carrying water is one of those strange unanswerable things. Where female slaves

## Common Customs

are luxuries beyond reach, the woman of the house carries the water and, with the children, tends the little herd of goats, cattle or sheep, guarding them in the bush during the day and driving them home to the thorn boma at night.

Fuertes asked the interpreter one day just what the village-dwelling Abyssinian man did to pass the time away. The answer was:

“Oh, they just walk about—and they have no place to walk to.” And that, as far as we could make out, completely answers the question.

It is incomprehensible how the country Abyssinian manages to survive the heavy boredom that must be his. It is all well enough to rise early in the morning to get a good start loafing, but when such inaction faces one each day, day after day and year after year, it becomes a hard occupation. With nothing to do it follows naturally that he will sit in the shade long hours with friends—all in the same strenuous state of inertia—and while away the long days with rambling, pointless talk, heated arguments about nothing and ferocious but harmless discussion. This necessity for killing time is indubitably one of the things that develops in the Abyssinian his unpleasant proclivities for wrangling and arguing.

And yet, strange to say, they are not physically lazy; and they are not fat and in poor condition.



## Savage Abyssinia

Our caravan men—and natives we encountered in villages and along the trails—were tough, hardy and capable of covering great distances afoot. The Abyssinians are a race of great walkers. All day long, up and down steep hills, mountains and mule-killing escarpments they plodded, never tiring, never complaining, unpacking and re-packing mules with poorly adjusted loads, driving refractory animals from the bush back to the trail, traveling many miles further than those of us who kept to the trail. And upon two or three occasions they showed endurance of no mean order when mules were lost and had to be found before hyenas should discover them. Native guides, scouts and hunters we used from time to time were, without exception, literally as tough as the game they helped us to find. It must be their simple, plain diet of bread and meat: The white races could never stand such long periods of inaction without softening and physical deterioration.

On trek, with Christians and Mohammedans in the caravan, the meat question was somewhat complicated. The Abyssinian version of the Christian religion demands that an animal's throat be cut before the meat can be eaten. The cutting must be done by a Christian while the animal is alive. They were not particular how the cut was made: A small slit running lengthwise with the neck was sufficient and, as such an incision did no harm to museum

## Common Customs

specimens, there was no trouble keeping the Christians of the party supplied with fresh meat. But the Mohemmedan element was more strict. Their meat animals had to be slit from ear to ear cross-ways—and the cutting, of course, had to be done by one of their own belief: An animal cut by a Christian, even slashed in the proper Mohammedan manner was taboo. The meat of game needed for specimens therefore was never suitable for the Mohammedans; a slit from ear to ear would ruin any specimen. A common animal, of which we already had enough for museum purposes, had to be shot occasionally for the Mohammedans; duiker, reedbuck, oribi, hartebeest or bushbuck. An extract from my notes shows the rivalry between the two religions where fresh meat was concerned: The episode occurred on the slopes of Mount Albasso as the caravan pulled into a beautiful valley to make camp.

The day was bright and sunny and a cool breeze caused the deep grass to bow and wave and the leaves to rustle and whisper. It was the sort of place, with its big trees and grass-carpeted openings, that Sherwood forest must have been in the days of Robin Hood.

“The first half-dozen mules to arrive had been unpacked and were grazing knee deep in grass. Others were arriving by twos and threes, the mule

## Savage Abyssinia

men following. My syce took my mule, removed the Springfield from its scabbard and hung it by the sling strap on a low limb. Osgood, Fuertes and I were talking some ten feet away. One of the cook's boys started up the hill toward a patch of timber to rustle wood. It was the usual camp-pitching scene. Men shouted to each other, pack mules wandered or stood around waiting for their loads to be taken off.

"Suddenly the cook's boy raised a wild yell! A fine male bushbuck had leaped from his bed not over seventy yards from where we stood and was going at his best clip across the wide opening. Abyssinians are excitable where game is concerned, and as the men all saw the buck they yelled and pointed.

"My gun was the nearest. I jerked it off the limb and just as he disappeared in the woods landed a shot low down in the flank. Instantly every Abyssinian in camp, seeing the animal fall, tore after him like mad. Long knives were whipped out and the big race to see who could get there first and 'halleluh,' or cut his throat, was on.

"If a Mohammedan won then the meat could be eaten only by Mohammedans, and the Christian Abyssinians would be entirely out of it. It would work the other way if a Christian arrived first; the Mohammedans would be meatless. Hence the hurry.

"But the buck still had something to say about it.

## Common Customs

He was only wounded in the fleshy part of the hind leg and as he fell, rolled over on the slope and was on his feet again and going strong. The men were between me and the game, so I could not get another shot. The buck entered the edge of the wood with at least twenty yelling men at his heels, all waving knives. I ran over to try for another shot, but the quarry had disappeared. We scattered through the brush, searching, but for a good fifteen minutes saw not a sign of him. The men were all talking at once and thrashing around through the undergrowth; with all that hullabaloo I never expected to see him again.

"I was on the way back to camp, passing through a section of high brush with small openings between, when a shout—what fox hunters would call a 'view halloo'—sounded off to the left. Again came sounds of crashing, wild yells, as the twenty or more men rushed toward the game. They were headed my way, I could tell by the sound, and then, the buck going headlong bounded across a small opening. A second opening lay a few yards farther on and as he showed, crossing that in big, healthy jumps, my bullet, by merest luck, for there was no time to sight, went through his heart and he turned a regular old-fashioned 'hoolihan,' head over heels and rolled into a thornbush.

"The first of the knife wielders to arrive were

## Savage Abyssinia

neck and neck. There were four of them. As near as I could make out, two Christians and two Moham-medans. With knives in hand—I hate to think what might have happened if one had tripped and fallen on his big blade—down the slope they rushed, followed by a wild crashing as the rest came on.

“Straight into the thornbush they dove, bare-footed, with loose shammas flowing behind like the white draperies of ghosts. They swarmed through thorns and thicket and pounced upon the animal. It was too dense in there for me to see, but a Moham-medan won—by inches—and stuck the dying animal.”

Raw meat is the preferred dish and our caravan men ate pounds of it at a sitting. But I think the worst, the most sickening thing I ever saw them do in the gastronomic line happened one day on the Arrusi plateau when Bailey, Cutting and I each killed a reedbuck. Camp was to be pitched not more than a mile beyond so we told the syces and gun-bearers to gut the animals and we would send mules back to pack them in. As the entrails came out there was a scramble for the stomach of each animal. These were cut open, and, as we were far from water, the contents were simply shaken out and the tripe, or inner lining of the stomach was peeled off, wiped on the grass and devoured raw. I can under-





THE STORY-TELLER

CHRISTIANITY  
AS PRACTISED  
IN THAT  
SAVAGE LAND



TWO GALLA WOMEN NOT SO SHY  
AS THE OTHERS



THE DEBTOR IS CHAINED TO THE  
CREDITOR



## Common Customs

stand raw meat eating but—as Bailey, watching the gruesome spectacle, observed—“that beats me”!

In the outlying parts where white men are unknown and the inhabitants are Galla, where even Abyssinians seldom penetrate, the natives were shy as deer; the women especially so. They invariably hid in the brush as the caravan approached and I remember one typical family of Gallas passed near the Wabbi Shebeli river: The man ordered his wife by a motion of his long spear to disappear in the thornbush. She, with baby on the hip slipped away and hid like a quail. The man, spear upright, stood beside the trail as we passed but refused to answer simple questions about water and trails put by our boys; he remained poised on the balls of his feet, ready instantly to go into action if we should prove to be on a raid for slaves. Suspicious, wild as their own native animals, they have no confidence in the Abyssinians who conquered them years ago. Their attitude always showed the greatest distrust—which leads one to believe that Gallas may have been captured and led off into slavery in recent years.

We had been told in Addis that the Galla race was darker, more negroid than the Abyssinian. But this seems to be a misconception. They are chocolate brown, tall, with fine features, like the Somalis, silent, watchful, alert men, and I imagine if banded together under some sort of leadership

## Savage Abyssinia

and armed with rifles might prove to be a match for the Abyssinians.

A most unaccountable thing to me was the fact that neither Gallas nor Abyssinians, living in a country where there is much game—plenty of meat on the hoof—have ever developed a weapon with which to kill it. The American Indian in his natural state on the plains of our west got his living with the bow and arrow. South American Indians, Asiatic nomad tribes, Australian aboriginals, Eskimos, practically every savage race has found a way to kill its wild meat. But neither Abyssinian nor Galla utilizes the game of his country. They love meat, but game cannot be killed with a spear.

When you come to think of it, however, neither the Abyssinian nor the Galla race has contributed anything in any way, shape or manner, toward human progress. The nomadic herdsmen described in the Old Testament lived no more crudely than these people to-day. Food, water and shelter are the only things that seem to occupy their minds. They do hold sort of community hunts now and then: Twenty or thirty banded together on horseback will surround a small animal, reedbuck, duiker or oribi, and after much charging up and down sometimes manage to kill him with a spear. But the effort and the numbers necessary are so great that the trouble is more than the few pounds of meat are worth.

## Common Customs

Such hunts are seldom engaged in and are unprofitable from a meat standpoint.

During Lent the Abyssinian church prescribes abstinence from meat and all animal foods, including milk, eggs, butter or ghee. So strong is the church with these people that not more than two or possibly three of our forty men broke the rule throughout the forty day period; and those who did, we noticed, were careful not to do it where the others could see. They would have lost caste forthwith. This drastic prohibition left them nothing but sour bread made from tef flour, dried peas and the inevitable hot, pepper sauce. Even the Dejasmach Ayalu, when he came to our camp to lunch one noon, brought along his own supplies; food that he was sure had not been cooked in animal fat. It is probable that a chief of his intelligence adheres strictly to the dictum of the church more from motives of policy than belief. But I really think that the rank and file would allow themselves to be brought to the verge of starvation before they would touch meat in Lent.

We could not understand at first why men we picked up on the trail to guide us to the next water almost invariably refused to journey with the caravan more than one day away from their homes. In few instances did we find men who were willing to go two days on the trail. They said, and we found



## Savage Abyssinia

it was true, that they did not know the country beyond. For we learned later that an Abyssinian or a Galla is not safe out of his own immediate district. He may be caught by some neighboring Shum or village chief, who has at his disposal a few armed men. He may be speared or put to work as a slave or held for a few cows ransom; unless he is the subject of a powerful chief who might make inquiries.

An evidence of this occurred as we passed through the country of the Dejasmatch Ayalu in the north. The interpreter on our northern trip had been loaned to us by Ras Hailu, chief of the province of Gojjam. The interpreter was riding behind with the caravan at the time. A dilapidated stranger passed on the trail and as he arrived abreast of the interpreter we saw them in excited conversation. In the next five minutes the Garasmatch, or lieutenant, who had been sent with us as escort by Dejasmatch Ayalu, passed at a gallop with his armed force of a dozen men. We called in our limited Amharic, to learn what was the matter, but missed the meaning of his reply. The armed crowd disappeared ahead in a cloud of dust and we saw nothing more of them till about midnight when they returned to camp, bringing two bound captives. The affair was explained by the interpreter.

The dilapidated person being from Ras Hailu's

## Common Customs

province had recognized the interpreter, who was a man of standing in Gojjam, and stopped to tell his troubles. He had been traveling through Ayalu's wild province with five other men. They had been set upon by shiftas, captured, and held for ransom. They had nothing with which to pay and being so far from home had no way of procuring cattle or mules. They had been held for five weeks and put to work. This man had made his escape the day before and was now hurrying back on the long trail home. If he had not met our interpreter, his friends might have become regular slaves. As it turned out the garasmach and his force surrounded the tukuls of the shiftas and captured the headman without firing a shot. The kidnaped men were freed and departed for home, twenty days' journey to the southward. The shiftas were sent to Dejas-mach Ayalu for punishment.

They were not brigands in our sense of the term. They did not roam the country in a band, striking here to-day and miles away to-morrow, as used to be the fashion in bandit circles of America. But were merely villagers—usually pursuing peaceful occupations—or lack of them—but when strangers from distant parts happened along and they needed men to cultivate their fields—or thought they could get something in the way of payment later—stepped out and captured them. It is this common practice

## Savage Abyssinia

which makes the trails unsafe for the native.

For the most part the chiefs and village Shums we met were the more intelligent of the population. Their people obeyed and feared them; for, in his district, a chief has almost unlimited power. A man would not dare to guide our caravan without orders from his chief. When entering a new locality, therefore, we first sent the interpreter with Ras Tafari's credentials to the local chief or village headman. He would be invited to call upon us and would be received with ceremony.

Our boys always enjoyed those palavers. Impressed with the importance of petty chiefs they stood about in attitudes of respect when a Shum arrived with his following of twenty or thirty armed men. Tea and the rum bottle would be brought and while the chief's escort stood outside, that dignitary would be ushered into a tent and seated at the table. Polite conversation would then be in order; game conditions, trails, water and shiftas were the leading subjects discussed, with us doing most of the questioning, for—a thing at which we never ceased to marvel—even the Shums, the pick, the most intelligent of the inhabitants, were devoid of all curiosity about the outside world! We had, in camp, a typewriter, a moving picture camera, several still cameras, camp chairs and tables that folded, tinned food, books, a hundred wonders strange to those

## Common Customs

men. Yet, not one showed the slightest curiosity about them or about the world from which we had come. It wasn't politeness; for we voluntarily tried to interest them; it was ignorance so dense that imagination had been atrophied, combined perhaps, with a proud and smug self-satisfaction.

One Shum, near Mount Albasso, assured us that the greatest pleasure he had in life was the slaying of men and lions. His ancient gun was carried by a stalwart henchman and he admitted being a dead shot; whatever he aimed at, presumably like Davy Crockett's coon, might just as well give up hope and lie down. That morning, it happened, Bailey had been planning to test out his Springfield. It had fallen on the rocks the day before and he was not sure the sights were in alignment. The chief was invited to shoot with Bailey. We put up a paste-board cartridge box against a tree and paced off fifty yards. Bailey hit the box three times without a miss. When the slayer of men and lions, the admitted Daniel Boone of those parts, saw this he refused to give an exhibition of his own shooting. The ancient smooth-bore was handed back to the tall henchman and the chief expalined at some length that he had gotten up too early that morning and was not feeling well.

One of Ayalu's chiefs did show a little curiosity: We had asked innumerable questions about the ibex

## Savage Abyssinia

country of Simien—we were then upon the edge of it—and he had been explaining routes and trails. We brought out a book written by an Englishman who had hunted ibex several years before. It had pictures of the stupendous cliffs and bold headlands of that infernally rough terrain. The Shum knew and recognized the locations. He was speechless with amazement:

“But you say you have never been there—you have never even been to Abyssinia before! Then, how can you have a thing like this which shows what the Simien country is like? How can that be?”

We explained that the English hunter had taken photographs, and tried to make clear what photography was.

“Oh,” he almost whispered, subdued and awed, “you Ferengies are the cleverest people in the world. We Abyssinians never could have thought of anything like that. And now you know as much about Simien as if you had been there—and all because some other Ferengie has given you this thing!” And the old fellow was too astonished for further expression.

Down south in the wilder parts of the Galla country, where villages are small and widely separated by tracts of desert, where nothing whatever is grown and the villagers depend upon goats, cattle or camels for their living, conditions are far less safe



## Common Customs

for the natives themselves than in the northern, or Abyssinian part. And that—as we have said—is by no means safe for the common people.

The Galla race is divided into many tribes. The ramifications of these, their connections with others, their feuds, are matters so involved, that to acquire real information upon the subject would require years of study. There is often strife between tribes inhabiting the same general area. Not real warfare: but killings, raids, cattle-stealing and the like. This state of affairs seems to be accepted as only natural by the natives of Gallaland. To them it is only right and proper that if one should be found in the territory of another chief he should be looked upon as fair game. A rather quaint practice perhaps gives rise to this accepted and evidently agreeable custom:

Among many Galla tribes a young man cannot take a wife until he has killed his man and can prove it by bringing back certain portions of the victim's anatomy. As one native informant put it:

“He then enters his own village and sits down in the center. He waits, and soon all the girls—all the prettiest girls—come and put butter in his hair and comb his hair straight up and then he can have any of them for wife.”

We had some difficulty sending back mail reports, while in the south. None of our boys would, for any remuneration carry mail through certain sec-

## Savage Abyssinia

tions. Upon two or three occasions we tried to hire local natives for this purpose. None of these would even consider it. It was necessary to hold the mail until we arrived at a place where two men traveling together with guns could make the return trip by a comparatively safe route: They had no desire to contribute to the happy union of some swain and the blushing lady of his choice.

The Gallas are either pagans or Mohammedans and our Abyssinians, while in the Galla country, never let an opportunity pass to point out with loathing the evidences of some pagan rite of the Gallas. Here might be a group of stones beside the trail arranged in a ring or a strange design. That was the idiotic, Galla way, they said, of bringing confusion to enemies. And their disgust knew no bounds. They were overbearingly superior in their own Christianity. I remember asking Looloo, at that time interpreter, upon one occasion when his superiority complex had been working well, to explain why even he wore a string of leather charms around his neck—what each was for.

“This one,” he said, pointing with pride, “is for protection against crocodiles. This other is sure to prevent tape worm—” which he, like all Abyssinians, had, without question. “And this—I do not know just what its specialty is—but it is very strong. I bought it from a priest in Addis. I

## Common Customs

bought them all from priests—but this is strongest because it cost the most.” All Abyssinians wear those strings of little leather packets containing wonder-working and mysterious ingredients—“foot of newt and eye of toad”—anything. Abyssinians are as superstitious as Gallas but their superstition has the cloak of religion. One day in the province of Amhara our men pursued and caught a villager who, they said, had had the temerity to cross the trail ahead of the caravan—in plain sight, too.

“Well, what of it? Perhaps he wanted to get on the other side.”

There was a great hullabaloo then. Ashagri, headman, packers, syces, tentboys, all taking part. Indignation ran high. They explained that, for a stranger to cross a trail ahead of a caravan while in plain sight would bring the worst luck imaginable to the caravan. They insisted the man had done it for that purpose and urged us to take him along, tied to one of our “stout fellas” arm and arm, and deliver him over to the headman of the next village for punishment. We had much argument before they let him go.

In that same province of Amhara, Abyssinian farmers, just before harvest time, cut bunches of dry grass. These they arrange in neat little piles at intervals of about fifty yards in a large circle around the place where the cut grain is to be

## Savage Abyssinia

threshed and driving cattle over it. The tiny grass piles are lighted and allowed to burn down to ashes.

The leaf of a cactus plant is placed on the ashes and a stone laid upon that. With a complete circle of such affairs around the threshing place and in all footpaths leading to it, the man of the soil may be sure of a good harvest; all demoniacal interference is thus checkmated. Our boys always walked around the piles that happened to lie in the trail and none ever had the hardihood to destroy one.

Our mule men were continually trying strange cures on sick mules. Burning a special kind of root and holding it so the mule would inhale the smoke was an old standby. And one day we returned to camp from a hunt to find all the men gathered in a circle on the ground. Ashagri, as usual, fanning himself with his white horsehair fly switch, presided. It was a grave clinic over the interpreter's mule, suddenly become seriously ill. The discussion went on for a half hour. Many cures were proposed but the one finally adopted was to throw the victim, tie his feet and with a hot iron make three crosses in the hair on each side, one on the hip, another on the ribs and the third on the neck. This cure was said to be the very last word in surgery. When the mule died it was clear that the cure had not been applied soon enough.

Christianity, the Coptic branch, as practiced in

## Common Customs

that strange country is a weird and wonderful thing. Some, well posted upon the church, claim that a third of the male population is enrolled in the priesthood, although not all are actively engaged in religious practice: The country is woefully priest ridden.

Priests have their own slaves, are assigned tracts of church land—a great proportion of the land is owned by the church, perhaps a third—and the priests do even less work, if such a thing is possible, than the ordinary man. Their influence is unbounded. He would be a hardy man—and this applies even to the great chiefs—who would dare flaunt the power of the church. Ras Hailu, perhaps the strongest chief after Tafari Makonnen, regent of the empire, caters to the immense numbers of priests in his territory of Gojjam. He builds new churches constantly, makes money presents, valuable gifts of land, cattle, rugs, cloth and whatnot, continually. And yet, Ras Hailu, when we asked him how many priests there were in Gojjam replied:

“Far too many. They do nothing but quarrel among themselves. But they are careful not to fuss and squabble when I am around.”

I imagine if Ras Hailu dared he would cut down the numbers in his vast principality by considerable. He certainly would not go on adding to them. But he is well aware of their power and knows that—so long as he plays their game they will be of the



## Savage Abyssinia

greatest assistance in helping him maintain his own high position.

I had an interesting conversation with one of the head priests in Ras Hailu's domain. We were camped a few miles from the village of Mota, a large and important place of nearly three hundred grass tukuls. It was necessary to replace some worn out pack mules and we decided, if possible, not to buy more animals but to hire a negahdi with a string of fifteen or sixteen. There were at least a dozen negahdis in Mota, and we anticipated no difficulty. Several negahdis agreed upon our price per load to the town of Gondar twelve or fifteen days' travel north. But they demanded full pay in advance.

This would never do. The negahdi is a wily bird, skilled in deception. In a land where unscrupulousness flourishes, the negahdi, because of his experience on the trails, is easily the king of tricksters. We were perfectly willing to pay half in advance—the balance upon arrival at Gondar—the usual terms. But it was only too evident that we had to have more mules or we couldn't go on and they stood pat. It looked as if we might encounter a serious delay. But I remembered that this was still Ras Hailu's country—the northern edge of it—and decided to call upon the headman of the village and, in the name of Ras Hailu, demand his intercession. The chief aboona, or priest, of Hailu's northern district, I learned, was the big gun of Mota. And, guided

## Common Customs

by a naked boy from the village and followed by the interpreter, rode through winding alleys between the grass and mud tukuls, stared at on every side. At length we came to a narrow footpath and drew up in front of a thick, timbered gate in a stone wall. Two coal black slaves held our saddle animals and a third ran inside to advise the aboona that he had callers. After a short delay we were shown through to an inner court. Ordinary grass-roofed tukuls formed three sides but the fourth was occupied by a large, round, two story stone house, also with grass roof, but much more substantially built than the others. The high priest came to meet us. He was all smiles, shook hands cordially and said :

“I received a letter from Ras Hailu saying that I was to expect a party of three Americans soon. And ordering me to take good care of you and give you anything you may want.” We knew then that our troubles were over. Wherever Ras Hailu gives orders there is nothing to do but state your wants.

The aboona wore a snowy turban and a handsome shamma of fine, soft weave, the result of months and months of hand labor. His countenance was open—for an Abyssinian priest—and the foxy, darting, suspicious, side glances so noticeable in most of those we met were lacking in this venerable person. He seemed perfectly sure of himself, and was, I believe, actually glad to see us.

Following the aboona, we climbed a narrow flight

## Savage Abyssinia

of steps of flat stones that ran up the outside wall of the house. Slaves hurried ahead to light a small copper lamp that stood in a niche in the wall inside an upper room. There were sun-tanned skins on the floor and a divan, covered with skins and rugs stood at the far end upon a sort of raised platform. Stools hewn from logs were placed for us. The aboona sat cross-legged on the divan. It was mid-afternoon but the place had no window, only a single narrow port or transom; the kind you would expect to find in the attic of a haunted house. And with the flickering light from the small copper lamp the room was in deep twilight.

The high priest got down to business at once: We told him we wanted a negahdi with mules to take us as far as Gondar and stated why we could not make a deal. He turned to one of his attendants, several of whom stood beside him, and ordered all the negahdis in the village to be summoned immediately.

"Now," he said, turning to the interpreter, "the man from a far country and I, can talk. The negahdis will not be here for a half hour. I have never seen an American," he continued. "I have met two or three Europeans but never an American. None has been through this country. Is America a Christian nation?"

I assured him that we called ourselves Christians



A FAMILY AT HOME



WATCHING HIS SLAVE PLOW  
WITH WOODEN STICK



NESTS OF WEAVER BIRDS



KEEPING OFF WILD PIGEONS





## Common Customs

but that some of us were weak vessels and many fell by the wayside, as no doubt they did in his country.

"Too true," he sighed, "all too true."

Happily, the conversation changed:

"How old are you?" he asked. I told him, and returned the compliment by asking his age.

"Seventy-six," he announced with pride. Then added: "But the head of our church in Egypt is over one hundred."

From the way he said it I got the impression that he thought the head of the Coptic church in Alexandria was immortal. So I asked if that personage might be expected to live forever.

"Certainly," he replied, with a slight trace of impatience, as if such a question was a useless waste of time.

"People in your country," the old priest went on, "do they live as long as we do?"

"No. I think not. They work too hard."

"The reason," he explained, "is because your food is weak. Our food is very strong. That is why we Abyssinians are a tough people."

He was surprised to learn that we have "strong" food, too. But, evidently seized by a new thought, changed the subject again and, with a slightly amused air, observed:

"I have heard that you Ferengies claim the world turns around?"

## Savage Abyssinia

I was anxious to avoid an argument or take a position that might be against the dogmatic statements of his religion—at least until the mule question had been settled. But I risked it.

“I will show you how we know the world is round and why we claim it turns on its axis.” There was a large almost round basket of plaited twigs on the floor against one wall. It would do well for a miniature world. The copper lamp gleaming fitfully in its niche was just the thing for a sun. With these stage properties I sat on the floor and gave an illustrated lecture. The aboona got down on his knees to see better. He was intensely interested. He had never heard anything like that simple explanation of the cause of day and night. But he was unconvinced: He thought a long time and then came out with a question, a keen one, too:

“If what you say is so, then, why is it that during some parts of the year the sun comes up here, at another season it rises here?”—indicating points on the basket—long distances apart. He sat back on his haunches, smiling triumphantly. The interpreter looked at me without much hope and the several attendants whistled slightly through closed teeth; they *knew* he had me there!

The somewhat involved tale of the sun's journey north and south of the equator and of the earth tilt-

## Common Customs

ing on its axis was too much. They wouldn't swallow that one:

"No, said the old priest, with finality, "you can never make us believe that the world whirls around. It is the sun that moves around us. We have known it for years in this country!"

At that point a slave brought a decanter of tej—honey beer, made as the Norsemen concocted their strong liquor, mead. The slave poured a horn drinking cup to the brim, carried it to the aboona and, intentionally spilling some in his own cupped palm, drank that off and handed the cup to the priest. The slave did the same with the rest of us. It was the first time I had actually seen precautions taken against poison. Perhaps this was the reason the high priest had reached the ripe old age of seventy-six. And Ras Hailu's observation about priests wrangling and quarreling among themselves came to mind.

The negahdis were now below in the courtyard and we descended the flat stone steps. The aboona and I sat in state side by side and negahdis were ranged before us standing in a semi-circle. They were badly frightened. It was all over in ten minutes. The aboona told them what price they could charge and fixed the terms of payment—There was no argument, no dissention. It was finished.



## CHAPTER V

### CLIMATE, PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY, RIVERS, RESOURCES

**B**ROADLY speaking, Abyssinia is a plateau fairly round in shape and surrounded on all sides by low, sandy and intensely hot deserts. To the westward the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and Lake Rudolph border this high mountainous mass. South, Kenya Colony and Italian Somaliland enclose it. Eastward, a thin strip of desert, the Red Sea coast, divided into British Somaliland, French Somaliland and Italian Erytrea complete the circumference of the circle, for Erytrea extends across the northern side to meet the Sudan.

Perhaps ninety per cent of the mountain empire lies above six thousand feet and eighty per cent around eight thousand. Vast mountain ranges with peaks that rear heads twelve, thirteen and even fourteen thousand feet above the level of the sea rise from the great plateau. There are some plateaus wide and extensive without canyons or mountains: Gojjam, Shoa, Arrusi, Sidamo, all contain such comparatively level plains. Some of these are enough like the plains of Wyoming to be startling and it is easy to imagine yourself again upon the



## Savage Abyssinia

pleasant reaches of the Laramie Plains. For five days we trekked across the Arrusi plateau en route to the river Wabbi Shebeli (leopard river) seeing scarcely a tree, no hill worthy of the name and no breaks or canyons: nothing but a limitless sea of grass waving and nodding in the wind. There was plenty of water, for there is much rain in the Arrusi, but no rivers worthy of the name.

At the eastern termination of this plain the great Arrusi escarpment drops like the side of a giant table. Down four thousand feet. So steep that for great distances is found no possible descent for mules. From the eastward we could look back for days and see that giant's table shimmering in the sunlight, reaching across the world from north to south, apparently as straight as if cleaved by the single stroke of a sharp instrument.

Northward in Shoa is another broad and level plain uncut for immense distances. But this is more rolling, a beautiful countryside with occasional large groves of trees, hills and valleys, and winding watercourses. Further north Gojjam is still more broken. But over large areas, there as well, are no really rough canyons. But these extensive, level, or almost level, regions, are the exception and the country as a whole is a mass of mountains and canyons—a torn and riven jumble of peaks and cliffs and escarpments, piled helter-skelter on a high table-

## Physical Geography

land. And the thing is on so massive and grand a scale that its ruggedness becomes depressing after a few months of travel. Mules give out and the distance covered in a day's trek shows so small upon the map that the traveler begins to wonder whether or not he will ever reach his destination. And it is impossible to make long marches because of the difficulties of the country; the deep canyons and steep ascents. The Muger river is an example: For a distance of fifty miles there are but two trails leading down from the plateau, four thousand feet. Coming upon this great drop suddenly the spectacle is discouraging. It will take two days of heart-breaking work to cross. And the Muger is nothing out of the ordinary for Abyssinia.

Another three days' trek on the northward journey lies the Blue Nile canyon; a gash six thousand feet deep. This will take three or perhaps four days to cross with packs, every foot of it mule-killing work—weak mules in the caravan will not be able to make it.

Upon the eight thousand foot rims of these great riven scars in the earth the weather is delightful; fresh, breezy, always cool in the shade and cold at night. But each thousand feet of descent makes a surprising difference in temperature. Until, in the river bottoms, the days are hot as the nethermost pit, the sun strikes with a blazing fury that is in-

## Savage Abyssinia

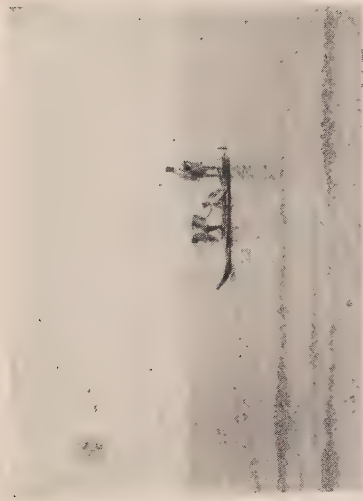
sufferable and the nights are far from comfortable. The flora and fauna change in marked regularity. It is possible to guess almost the exact altitude by the change in vegetation and the appearance of different bird species. Abyssinia, being largely high country, enjoys one of the best climates in the world, although but fifteen degrees north of the equator. But, below the six thousand foot level, in the inevitable canyons, fever lurks the year 'round—especially dangerous during the rainy season.

There are all sorts and conditions of terrain in this last independent African kingdom for its boundaries extend east into the Somali desert, west into the fever-haunted jungles of the upper Nile drainage basin and south into the arid wastes toward Lake Rudolph. But the low, hot fringes, outskirts, are not the real Abyssinia. That, as we have said, is the high, rocky, giant's table that stands, a Titanic bulwark, its peaks and buttresses thrust into the African sky, a monument to the ancient geologic forces that created it when the world was young. And among those peaks, plateaus, escarpments and elevated plains dwells the unconquered, highland race—the children of the Queen of Sheba.

What valuable deposits of oil, what wealth of gold, silver, platinum, iron, manganese, lead, mercury and the like, much needed by the outside world whose civilization is based upon such things, lies



THE RIVER HAWASH



A REED BOAT ON LAKE TSANA



A WILDER PART OF THE COUNTRY



A BEAUTIFUL CAMP SITE





## Physical Geography

hidden in those dark ranges—no man knows. It has never been prospected. But Ras Tafari, has native gold in store, plenty of it, so report goes. And Ras Hailu, upon our departure from his stronghold, presented each member of the expedition with a magnificent ring, three inches in diameter, of native gold so soft and malleable it could be worked and bent in the fingers.

“From my territory to the westward,” he said, as he gave them to us. “Something to remind you of Gojjam and Ras Hailu when far away in your own country.”

The Dejasmach Ayalu was not to be outdone. Our interpreter had mentioned Ras Hailu’s gifts and the Dejasmach, proud chieftain, followed suit —“gold from my own mountains.”

But the real wealth of Abyssinia lies in its unlimited possibilities for producing grain and livestock. Minerals are problematic. Grain and livestock are sure. For no man could travel through the empire and not be impressed with its climatic and soil conditions; ideal for those two valuable commodities: If a black slave, driving a team of humped oxen to a bent stick plow, swinging his long whip of hippo hide, chanting interminably a savage refrain, can scratch the earth and achieve therefrom three magnificent crops a year—what could be done with modern machinery guided by intelligent

## Savage Abyssinia

farmers? The massive humped cattle—especially those around the shores of Lake Tsana, are a delight to the eye. Gentle and docile as dogs,—for they are herded by day and kept in enclosures by night—move huge bulks lazily aside as you pass. Estimating the weight of a fair humped steer, I should place the figure at fifteen hundred pounds. They are blocky, the brisket with its loose flap of skin hangs below the knees. Short coupled, they stand strong and sturdy and the width viewed from behind recalls the fattened pure breeds seen in the stalls at an international stock show in Chicago. And these cattle have been haphazardly bred by catch-as-catch-can methods by savages. Winter never comes. And the humped cattle have built up an immunity against fever, ticks and like destructive agencies. There is plenty of room, plenty of grass, water enough. And for eight months in the year the sun shines and one day is the exact replica of another.

Coffee, perhaps as good in quality as that of the famous Arabian territory of Yemen, is grown in some valleys. Coffee demands certain climatic conditions and, they say, peculiar soil analyses. Such conditions are found in many far flung parts of the black empire. The province of Kaffa, some historians claim, was the original coffee producing country—There it was that Arab slave raiders ob-

## Physical Geography

tained the bean for transplantation in their own country. On the main trail between Sidamo and Addis Ababa, along which is conveyed most of the coffee, pass more caravans perhaps than upon any other route: The coffee packs neatly done up in sun-tanned skins. But the customs system is too burdensome to permit the trade to flourish. Dried hides and coffee form the only exports of importance from that potentially rich empire.

Pepper is widely cultivated as it forms an important addition to the Abyssinian diet; everything the native eats reeks with pepper. Castor beans grow wild and wild fig trees flourish at some altitudes: The massive branches of this handsome tree spread to enormous widths in low, sweeping curves; our entire caravan, fifty men, often bivouacked beneath the branches of a single tree. Fruit and vegetables are not grown except in isolated instances. There can be little question of the fruit possibilities, however, as every tropical condition of climate is to be found. Vegetables, of course, would grow anywhere. But the principal crops are tef, a variety of millet, and barley. Tef forms the main article of native diet as it is tef flour, ground between stones, from which bread is made; dark, sour bread, frequently the sole food of the villager. Barley grows—or rather flourishes—on the plateaus. But tef is easily the leading grain.

## Savage Abyssinia

Travelers met on the trail—invariably have a goatskin of ground tef on their heads, if walking, or lashed to a mule or burro if affluent enough to afford the luxury of animals—It is remarkable how these people can maintain strength and cover great distances day after day on a diet of grain. Our men, during the forty day Lenten fast prescribed by the Abyssinian church, could not be induced to touch meat. Tef was all they had and they seemed to thrive upon it. But—how eagerly they counted the days and looked forward to the end of that rigorous fast period. It speaks volumes for the power of the church when not more than two out of fifty could be induced to break the rule and eat meat, although we did our best to persuade and tempt them.

Cotton is not cultivated except in a few, a very few, places. Ras Tafari is anxious to promote its cultivation and has removed from cotton the ten per cent tithe or tax that obtains on everything else. Cotton possibilities require study; there are many elements that enter into the production of this plant. There may be vast areas—no doubt there are some sections—where cotton can be successfully grown. That would take an expert to determine and I leave the matter alone. It is enough to say that the agricultural resources of Abyssinia have not been scratched.

## Physical Geography

Three great river systems drain the country: The Blue Nile, or Abbai, as it is called in Abyssinia, rising in Lake Tsana cuts its way southeastward through a tremendous chasm, swings in a wide loop to the west and north, tumbles off the plateau and enters the Sudan to join the White Nile at Khartoum. Through its entire course in the mountain kingdom it runs between volcanic rock walls five and six thousand feet high; a frightful gorge and a barrier impassable during four months of the year while the rains are falling.

The Omo river rises near the central highlands south of Addis Ababa and takes a southwesterly course to empty into Lake Rudolph on the boundary of Kenya Colony. It drains a rich and populous country of Galla villages. The Wabbi Shebeli, takes its rise near Lake Awasa and the Arrana mountains, heads due east for two hundred miles, swings southeast and enters Italian Somaliland. A great canyon, not as deep as that of the Abbai, but rough and difficult to cross marks its course. We followed the Wabbi eastward for three weeks and found the country along its banks to be dense thornbush jungle, for long distances, gradually becoming more desertly as we progressed eastward. The areas of thornbush along its reaches were sparsely inhabited by cattle and goat-raising Gallas, distrustful and wild. Tall spearmen who,



## Savage Abyssinia

in many places, could not be enticed into camp but dogged our trail through the brush, the points of their spears reflecting the sunlight as they crossed an opening. They were never in force enough to cause anxiety; they merely gave us that "chirpy" feeling of being watched and spied upon constantly.

The river Hawash, second largest in Abyssinia, rises a short distance south of Addis and flows eastward a hundred miles, turns northeast and enters that terra incognita, Dankaliland. It continues northeast in the direction of French Somaliland and the sea but—strange to state—this great river never reaches the sea. It is rumored to spread out into a mammoth swamp, something like the Lorian Swamp in East Africa and there to become stagnant in that low, hot country and either to sink into the sands of the Somali desert or to evaporate under the powerful rays of the burning equatorial sun. We had intended, if time allowed, to penetrate to the great swamp of the Hawash, although reports had it that the unconquered and altogether bad Danakil tribe would not allow either Abyssinians or white men to enter that mysterious land. But we had been prepared to find, upon closer investigation, that reports of the ferocity of the Danakil gentry had been overdrawn. We were mistaken and upon one occasion arrived at a village the day after Danakil raiders

## Physical Geography

had carried off thirty women and large herds of camels. The swamp of the Hawash in the heart of Dankaliland probably could not be reached without a force of at least a thousand well armed men.

The Danakil country is lowland, fever-ridden and for that reason, aside from the fact that the Danakils are reputed to be bonny fighters, the Abyssinians leave them strictly alone; although Dankaliland is nominally a part of Ras Tafari's domain. Tax collectors haven't lost any taxes in there and even after the sporadic raids of these ebullient savages the Abyssinian authorities forbear sending in punitive expeditions. There is an understanding—I almost wrote, gentleman's agreement—between the Danakils and their nominal masters, that, so long as they leave the railroad alone they can have their raids and wild frolics and these will be looked upon as the pranks and peccadilloes of untutored children. But should they again, as they have in the past, tear up ties, seize steel rails to beat into spear points and pull down telegraph wire for bracelets and anklets with which to adorn their females, it will no longer be taken as a joke and serious steps toward the complete annihilation of the Danakil tribe will then be in order: This happy arrangement seems to suit all parties and during the raid mentioned, which occurred at the town of Metahari, on

## Savage Abyssinia

the railroad, there was not so much as spike or tie or even glass insulator on telegraph pole removed.

The Abyssinian is essentially a highlander and seldom penetrates to the low countries; when he does, he dies, if he remains any length of time. The highlands are his home and he wants nothing to do permanently with the low, fever country along his borders. But with so great a range of altitude the climate of the plateau itself has a wide variation. Upon the rugged heights of Simien with its mesas rising to thirteen thousand feet, even the days, sunny and bright as they are, may be chill, especially in the shade: And the nights are often below freezing.

Abyssinia is white man's country. A temperature around seventy-five to eighty in the shade at midday with a drop of thirty degrees at night may well be called ideal. And these pleasant weather conditions prevail for eight months in the year with ten or twelve hours' sunshine every day. But in the rainy season the face of the earth changes. One of the principal reasons for the rugged nature of the country, its deep chasms, high escarpments, worn and gashed, their steep sides slashed in every direction as with a hashknife is the tremendous rainfall, the torrential downpours that occur with unceasing regularity every day in the three and a half months' rainy season. During this rigorous period,



CAMP ON THE PLATEAU



A MOHAMMEDAN GALLA



THE GALLAS OF THE LOWLANDS





## Physical Geography

when the flood gates of the heavens are opened the placid rivers boil through their canyons, rising higher and higher, carrying rocks, even huge boulders long distances. Trees—and all things reached by the flood are born away. Regular mountains of soil go downstream: It is this great flood of silt passing down the Blue Nile each year that has built up the fertile land of Egypt.

Small rivulets, gentle creeks, leave their banks and go on the rampage. Undrained, level areas become morasses, deep in water—and still the rains fall. The villager does not attempt to move from his hut. Trails are impassable and should a caravan be luckless enough to be caught abroad when the rains begin there is nothing to do but plow through to the nearest village, and, like an Eskimo when the long night comes, prepare to hole up for the rest of the season. This gloomy time of daily downpour, flood and great waters, begins about the middle of June and continues until the end of September. Approximately 900 millimeters of water fall in this short season.

There is another period of rain but this is only a pleasant variation from the endless sunny days that have been the rule for the previous months. It is called the Time of the Little Rains and is rather uncertain, beginning usually in January or February and lasting about six weeks. Then it rains

## Savage Abyssinia

gently and decently, perhaps every two or three days: short and refreshing showers.

At some ancient period—long ago even in geologic terms—a great disturbance occurred on the earth's crust in what is now the continent of Africa. A tremendous break opened extending from far down toward the southern extremity of the continent northward to the Red Sea: And the Rift valley was formed. The great central African lakes, lie within this gigantic depression. The break passed through the center of what is now Abyssinia and its direction is marked by escarpments and a chain of lakes from Rudolph to Lake Zwai just below Addis Ababa. There are nine within the boundaries of Ethiopia; some are salt, some fresh, some are alive with crocodiles while in others not a single saurian can be found. This phenomenon has not been satisfactorily explained for conditions are favorable for the big reptiles in all of them. And most of these bodies of water are connected by streams and rivers.

Beautiful Lake Tsana in the north, the fountain head of the Blue Nile is an immense fresh water lake. Almost round in shape it is approximately fifty miles in diameter but is reported to be comparatively shallow. An extract from my notes written the morning of our first sight of this inland sea will give an idea of its appearance:

[ 100 ]

## Physical Geography

“On the crest of a steep range of wooded hills about nine thousand feet above sea level, the trail led around a bare, grassy point. The country ahead fell away, lower and lower as far as the eye could see and in the hazy distance to the northwestward Lake Tsana, source of the Affai, lay shimmering in the sunlight. The near shoreline was plainly visible, indented and irregular. The waters blended with the blue haze and the opposite shore was beyond the limit of vision even on a clear day; for the near shore was thirty miles as the crow flies and the far coastline must have been forty or fifty beyond that. Ranges of hills, high and wooded, water-courses and flat plains in every direction sloped gradually toward that great inland sea which finds its level at six thousand feet.

“The distant prospect, the great body of water lying still and calm beneath the sun, half hidden in the mists and haze and partly obscured by the dancing heat waves of the atmosphere, the white bulk of a bank of fleecy cumulus clouds high above, the parklike ridges, the lower and more rolling downs, grassy or wooded that trended toward the waters made a spectacle of soft beauty that perhaps will not obtain upon closer approach. Be that as it may—the distant view was superb.

“An itinerant priest on his way from Addis to the Holy city, Axum, who had joined our caravan

## Savage Abyssinia

for safe conduct, was inspired by the sight. Standing in the trail for several minutes taking it in in all its grandeur, he turned abruptly and pronounced a benediction upon the whole caravan, mules and all. The men were visibly cheered and braced by this occurrence and the discussion of its good effects continued long after the caravan had started down the slope."

Although Lake Tsana is surrounded by mountains, rough, rocky and covered with brush, there is a level plain ten miles wide along the eastern side of the lake between the mountains and the water. This plain is knee deep in thick, rich grass. There are many villages and great herds of fine humped cattle dotting the landscape and the scene is one of settled and established prosperity. In that warm, winterless climate, wherever there is water, sedges, flags, reeds and marsh grass grow to a height of eight or ten feet. Consequently, along the lake shore a regular hedge of those water-loving plants extends in a thin line, following the water in all its windings and twistings.

A few yards further back from the lake is a line of trees: palms, acacia, wild olive, fig, queer flowering trees unlike any found in North America, and several kinds of bushes that grow to a height of twenty feet; some of which bear a reddish berry at

## Physical Geography

this season. Beneath the arching branches, leading everywhere, are cattle trails. For the natives come to the lake with their herds for water; the surrounding country is too settled to permit of any large game. But birds, waterfowl particularly, are there in myriads.

In the early morning long strings of geese; the Egyptian and Knob-goose predominating, may be seen circling overhead calling loudly. Great rafts of ducks, European teal, widgeons, spoonbills, yellow-billed Mallards, float upon the surface about a hundred yards from shore, preening their feathers, oblivious to the passerby. Beautiful white sacred ibis in great flocks alight in the open plain and stalk with careful, dignified tread among the cattle herds. Herons of many varieties, long legged cranes with high topknots of blood-red march through the grass like giant bird specters. Tiny kingfishers with orange throats and deep, navy-blue "top sides" rush back and forth on brick red wings intent upon the business of a kingfisher. The tall secretary bird, so named from his resemblance in appearance to the old-fashioned clerk or secretary in black, swallow-tail coat and tightfitting funereal trousers, struts along with keen, swordlike bill poised, ready to snap up belated frog or early snake. Snowy pelicans cruise through the air above the breaking waves in slow and cumbrous lines,



## Savage Abyssinia

necks tucked in, in the peculiar pelican kink, beady eyes peering for fish in the breaking waters below. Thousands of shore birds, wintering in that balmy climate, are preparing for the long flight northward to the Arctic ocean where many of them nest; snipe, curlew, plover, sandpipers, stilts: There is a parade of these nervous little fellows along the water's edge every morning.

About ten o'clock in the morning when the land begins to heat up a gentle breeze blows in from the cool waters of the lake. It increases in force as the sun beats stronger upon the baked earth, reaching its maximum about four in the afternoon. From then on it dies gradually as the air above the land cools. At dark there is not a breath of air stirring. Soon after, a land breeze springs up—for the earth has cooled rapidly—this continues until sunrise when the routine starts over again; it is as regular as a clock.

Lake Tsana is just now the subject of discussion in the foreign offices of more than one important nation. Its waters are father and mother to that life-giving stream, the Blue Nile. A dam to regulate the flow of lake water would be of the greatest benefit to the Sudan and Egypt: Much more water would be available for irrigation in that sun scorched land. Some day an agreement may be arrived at between the Sudan, Egyptian, Abyssinian

## Physical Geography

and British governments, a dam constructed and the waters of Tsana, now going to waste may be, under intelligent control, put to work on the farms of the low, hot, but immensely fertile deserts of the land of the ancient Pharaohs.



## CHAPTER VI

### SHIFTAS. DIFFICULTIES OF TRAVEL

**S**HIFTAS—brigands—are a real menace in most parts of the country. We were warned continually to be on the lookout for them and upon several occasions native caravans but a day or two ahead of us on the trail were held up and robbed: One unlucky native packtrain just a day in advance in the province of Amhara lost four or five slaves and a dozen mules. Most of the Rassas and Dejasmatches do what they can to rid their territories of Galloping Dicks but the widespread adherence to the theory that if you are strong enough to take your fellow man's belongings it is the thing to do makes it difficult for the high chiefs to remedy matters.

Ras Hailu told us that he had, but two weeks before, captured and hanged eight shiftas in one village in Gojjam. And he warned us repeatedly to be careful while passing through certain sections of his country. During our travels through Abyssinia, however, we met but two bands, one in the Arrusi and the other in Sidamo. Either affair had in it the makings of a real show, and if we had not

## Savage Abyssinia

been well armed and fully prepared for trouble, might easily have lost our entire outfit. The first occasion was the more dangerous of the two and as I look back upon that situation, I am more than ever convinced that we were lucky to be out of it so easily.

It had been a long, hard day. The mules were tired and the men were hot, dusty—and silent—always a sign that they have had enough. But we had to make the Kallata river. It was the only water. Three hours later we pulled up, watered the mules and pitched camp on the south bank. It was a beautiful little stream, more like a western trout brook than an African river.

The tents went up as usual in quick time and the mules were turned loose to graze. The sun swung low toward the horizon and the canyon of the Kallata lay in deep shadow. Strange birds were calling and it was about late enough for the evening hyena chorus to begin, when a long file of horsemen were silhouetted above on the canyon rim. Their spears were plainly visible against the background of sky. They dismounted to lead their ponies down the steep slope, winding through the rocks, carefully picking their way and doing a great deal of talking among themselves as they drew near.

Ashagri and Dabba, headmen, came running to Osgood's tent:



## Shiftas—Difficulties of Travel

“Shiftas! kufanoo!” they exclaimed, unable to control their excitement and alarm. (Brigands—very bad!)

It was indeed a wild and barbarian array that filed down to make camp on the other side. Forty-eight we counted, all with horses,—there was not a mule in the outfit, something unusual for Abyssinia—mobile, ready for anything and prepared to strike and make a dash.

“Whenever you see an armed force like that,” explained Dabba, “no women and without a single pack—all with horses—then you know they are not out for their health.”

The caravan men were called—they didn’t need much calling—and told to stand by for trouble. All the ancient black-powder guns of the zebanias were displayed and the men paraded before the tents, guns on shoulders, knives pushed to the front on belts: According to Abyssinian standards our camp was the last word in military preparedness.

The Gallas crossed the stream, stopping in the middle to water their horses, then filed up the other bank, dismounting about a hundred yards beyond. A few held the horses while the others stalked to the river to drink. We noticed that each savage before he lay flat upon his face to reach the water, pulled a handful of grass and cast it upon the stream. Our men, watchful as cats, explained that

## Savage Abyssinia

this was a Galla custom—one of their pagan rites.

High up on a bold cliff, perhaps a quarter of a mile to the westward, two natives peered down from a rocky vantage point. They were watching that band of Gallas closely, but at the same time their actions showed, were desperately afraid of being seen themselves. Only their heads rose above the rocks: Perhaps they had women or children, cattle or mules, which they did not want stolen.

We expected trouble—not at once but some time during the night. We knew the Gallas would never venture an attack in broad daylight. We had them clearly outgunned: In fact, they were armed with nothing but the long Galla spears. But spears, in the velvety blackness of an African night, when men can creep up swiftly and silently, are weapons of no mean caliber. And we thought that our fifty mules, all in good condition at that time, would be a temptation that could not be resisted. So extra guards were posted, though there was small need of that for every man in camp was wide awake. We five white men made light of the affair and observed to Dabba and Ashagri that we were sure nothing would happen. But we didn't feel that way. My Springfield lay upon the tent floor-cloth beside the cot, muzzle to my feet, within reach of a sudden hand. Osgood remarked that he might as well have a few extra shells handy. Fuertes, I know, had

## Shiftas—Difficulties of Travel

his shotgun—an ornithologist, he hates a rifle—loaded with buckshot. Bailey and Cutting too were fully prepared.

That was a dark night—I never expect to see a darker—and there were no fires in camp.—We thought it only fair to give ourselves as much chance as the other fellow in case of a raid.—The Kallata river running over its rocky bottom gurgled and talked and whispered and questioned querulously. The great trees lining the banks stood silent as black specters in the still air. We waited and tried occasionally to peer through the gloom.

The Gallas were camped on the opposite bank, not more than five hundred yards away. We could hear them talking, indistinctly. They had a few small fires burning and occasionally a tall warrior passed close to one of these, his straight figure looming large and casting a gigantic shadow that danced and jumped, darting here and there over the canyon wall behind. It gave us a distinctly spooky feeling to lie there in our tents, waiting.

But some time during the night or in the early morning the raiding party pulled away. At any rate they were gone by daylight and we never saw them again. Perhaps peaceful villages to the northward along the Hawash river heard from them. I imagine that no band of Sioux warriors in the old days, upon the Western plains, ever appeared more

## Savage Abyssinia

fit, more mobile and more dangerous. Dabba and Ashagri remarked they were glad they had not met those Gallas when with a small caravan.

"Had we been a weak party," they said, "those fellows would certainly have taken everything we owned and perhaps speared us in the bargain."— And from the wild and reckless appearance of the forty-eight, I can well believe it.

Upon a later occasion, when the party had been divided and Osgood and Fuertes with half the caravan, about twenty-five men, were on their way to the Jumm-Jumm forest, they encountered another band of shiftas. The caravan had just crossed a swaying bridge of bows and withes over a swiftly running stream. The mules climbed the canyon side and at the top of the steep ascent, some fifty Gallas, tall men with the usual long-bladed spears, were drawn up across the trail.

"You will stop here," they ordered the interpreter, "Unpack your mules and we will inspect your loads. We are customs officials."

Dabba, who well understood the practices of his country, looked them over and concluded they were no more employed by the customs than he was. Posing as customs people is a favorite shifta trick. But to avoid making a mistake, Dabba produced the passports from Ras Tafari, giving exemption from customs duties and customs inspection.

## Shiftas—Difficulties of Travel

The chief glanced at it with a disinterested expression and handed it back.

"It is no good," he said with scorn.

Then Dabba knew for sure that the man couldn't read and that the demand was a trick to get the loads off the mules, the men scattered about in a more defenseless position, when the brigands would take charge. A heated argument was in progress by the time Osgood and Fuertes arrived. They took in the significance of the proceedings at once and ordered the zebanias to stand by for trouble.

The argument, as all Abyssinian arguments do, rapidly became vociferous. The Gallas were bold. They demanded immediate acquiescence. They would unpack the mules themselves. They threatened and shouted. They waved black arms and shook spears.

But by this time the men of the caravan had ranged themselves beside Osgood and Fuertes with cocked guns. The click of raising hammers on the heavy guns had a better effect than all the former talk.—It is a universal language, needing no translation.—The Galla spearmen hesitated. They toned down threats and wild exclamations and appeared to recollect that, after all, there is a fellow named Ras Tafari in Addis who is supposed to have some authority in the country.

The chief danger in such situations arises from



## Savage Abyssinia

the vitriolic Abyssinian nature. The men are like big children. They become worked up to fighting pitch as an argument proceeds and the caravan men, knowing they have the backing of white men with good guns, are liable to go too far. In this case they would have liked nothing better than an excuse to collect a few Galla shiftas as trophies of the chase. Gallas and Abyssinians have no use for each other, and such an affair has in it the germ of a first-class riot that may end in killings.

A scientific expedition has work to do and no time to waste in the worthy endeavor to make a wild locality safe for democracy, and above all, it should avoid serious trouble that might cause complications with the central government, long delays and general entanglements. Then there is also the danger that such a band may have the whole locality behind them—a thing never taken into consideration by your Abyssinians, who think that with your help they can wipe out the Gallas in a dozen villages.

So when the self-styled customs officers drew back, Osgood and Fuertes gave the order to keep going, the caravan filed on by and the incident was closed. The difficulties of travel in Abyssinia for small traders are almost prohibitive, and this affair was only one instance of the many annoyances to which even large caravans are subject.





THE GREAT ARRUSI PLATEAU



DEATH IN THE WOODS

(Arrow points to body hung for a year in the tree)



## Shiftas—Difficulties of Travel

But most shiftas have a healthy respect for white men. They know that whites traveling through their turbulent country are sure to be well armed and fully prepared for any eventuality. And they have been given to understand that should harm come to a white man, the authorities in Addis, as well as their own higher chiefs, will descend upon them with a devastating horde of zebanias, burn villages, lay waste the entire locality and leave no stone unturned to apprehend the guilty parties. International complications and the antagonization of a powerful foreign country are things which Ras Tafari and his government fear beyond all else. In the case of a Frenchman who was speared by Gallas in the south a few years ago, eight or nine villagers were taken to Addis in chains and hanged in the market place. For these reasons the shiftas limit murders to their own countrymen and a caravan with white men is, as a rule, safe enough—but exceptions might occur.

In the province of Amhara we passed, one bright morning, the bleached bones of two shiftas that had been hanging in the trees for a year or two. They had been bound and suspended from limbs; thick vines had been wound around and around their bodies and eagles and vultures had picked the bones clean; and there they dangled, rattling in the breeze, "brisk lads swinging in the wind at execu-

## Savage Abyssinia

tion dock"—an example to reckless spirits who might otherwise hearken to the call of plunder.

Early one morning, as we were packing up, a force of armed men tumbled into camp much excited:

"We heard firing--where are the shiftas?" they demanded.

Bailey had been using the shotgun on francolin and sand grouse. The hasty arrivals assured us that there had been much robbery of late in that district and they had come from the nearest customs place to lend us a hand. But as between the shiftas and the customs people I should almost prefer the shiftas. For the Abyssinian customs system is nothing short of atrocious. The chief of a province can establish customs houses wherever he pleases in his own territory. Often a caravan will pass two in a single day. The customs officials are not paid a salary and like soldiers, quarter themselves upon the natives of a village. The head customs officer gets a percentage of what he collects, which makes him over-zealous. The only check the ruler of the province has upon his customs houses are the returns. If he fails to receive as much as he thinks proper from a district, he sends a squad of warriors to bring back the headman in chains. It chafed many of the customs people sorely to allow our heavily loaded caravan to pass

## Shiftas—Difficulties of Travel

without payment and some of them made every effort to hold us up and force a bribe.

Abyssinians, when given a little authority, become changed men. A customs officer is a high and mighty person, lording it over the villagers—a big frog in a little puddle. Although a caravan may have the best of credentials, personal letters from Ras Tafari and a free pass from the chief of the province, still the customs people will be, about half the time, overbearing and insufferable.

Upon the northern trip as we arrived at the rim of the great canyon of the Blue Nile, we came to a village perched precariously upon the edge of that deep chasm. The grass tukuls looked, at a distance, like a cluster of bird nests. We had no idea it was a customs post for in Abyssinia, where there are no buildings a customs post simply means a village where a customs force happens to be living. We were all riding some distance in advance of the caravan when wild shouts behind interrupted our casual conversation. Osgood and I rode back and found our men in a free-for-all fight with fifty or sixty armed and yelling natives. I remember Abtul, one of our strongest and best packers, swinging his clubbed gun—clearing a space about him. The strangers had seized the leading mules and were attempting to turn them into the village. Abtul and the rest were fighting to prevent this.

## Savage Abyssinia

The chief of the customs party was one of the roughest looking specimens of humanity I have ever seen outside a jail; he was the typical buccaneer. Dabba singled him out, standing a short way beyond the yelling, fighting crowd, surrounded by ten or twelve henchmen, handed him the pass and told him to call his men off before some one got killed. The headman could not read, but he saw Ras Tafari's seal at the bottom. This usually sufficed in such cases, but this fellow was determined to cause all the trouble he could. He made no move to call off his men and by this time things had waxed so furious that we were afraid some hot-head on either side would let off a gun and start a real battle.

The buccaneer folded the pass and tucked it somewhere in the folds of his shamma:

"I will keep this," he announced with finality.

"You'll do nothing of the kind," we retorted. We couldn't have traveled ten miles without it—which he well knew.

Meanwhile we had managed to align our men upon one side of the trail and the customs ruffians on the other. We demanded our pass, but again the headman refused while his men held guns sloping across chests, ready. We did not dare attempt to take the pass by force. If we had, men upon both sides would have been killed. We could not



## Shiftas—Difficulties of Travel

go on without it, but at the same time were determined not to pay one dollar of tribute.

Dabba, in a long harangue, referred to us repeatedly as great chiefs in our own country and bosom friends of Ras Tafari. He ended by promising that if the pass was not forthcoming at once, we would communicate with the Ras immediately with the result that the entire customs force would be taken to Addis in chains. The old buccaneer laughed at that. Then Dabba, at our direction, read aloud, sitting on his mule, our personal letter from Ras Tafari, a letter commanding every one, from the governors of provinces down, to show us every consideration and give us anything we wanted. It was a strong letter, and after the reading Osgood and I thought the moment favorable. So we rode on, ordering Dabba to give one more warning:

"If you fail to send that pass to our camp tonight, Ras Tafari and Ras Kassa," ruler of Shoa province and the buccaneer's chief, "will hear of this affair within the week." Dabba threw the Amharic words back over his shoulder as we rode ahead.

The black customs robber made no comment, but as Dabba caught up we could see a stirring in the throng, then came a shout to return and we could have our pass. We paid no attention but continued

## Savage Abyssinia

to ride on. The full import of Ras Tafari's letter had sunk in. The customs chief knew he had gone too far and could, perhaps, in imagination, hear the clank of chains. A henchman came running after us, waving the pass. We spurred into a gallop. The man increased his speed. It took him a half mile at his best pace to catch up. With repeated deep obeisances, he handed over the paper, salaaming and bowing between honeyed Amharic phrases. That crossing of the Abbai has the reputation of being a dangerous place for shiftas, but I imagine the customs people on the southern side are worse than any brigands. If they would dare to treat us in such fashion—a strong party with the best possible credentials—what would they do to a small native caravan without passes of any kind and without influence in high quarters?

But the worst experience we had with customs people was in the province of Amhara, a short distance south of Lake Tsana. We came to a cluster of huts on a hilltop about ten o'clock one morning. The usual armed men rushed out and in the customary loud and threatening manner, demanded to know who we were. Our credentials were handed over and read with some difficulty. We were then ordered to wait until the chief customs officer arrived. That most high and deliberate personage had not yet issued forth for the day. We sent the

## Shiftas—Difficulties of Travel

caravan along to avoid having twenty loaded mules milling around the village—where the natives could easily have slipped off a few packs and concealed the equipment in their tukuls—while we sat down to await the arrival of the local czar. A half hour later that barefooted dignitary sauntered down the slope, languidly fanning himself with a horsehair fly switch and attended by four gunbearers. We greeted him pleasantly which he acknowledged with the slightest of nods.

Instead of turning at once after reading the pass and saying “ishi”—all right—he delivered an oration in a loud and declamatory tone, saying in effect:

“You cannot go on. You must pitch camp here. You must wait until I send a messenger to Ras Guksah and receive the answer that it is all right for you to proceed. You have a pass from Ras Tafari—but Ras Tafari is nothing to me. My chief is Ras Guksah and you have no letter from him.”

Ras Guksah is chief of Amhara but he, like all governors of provinces, is nominally under the rule of Ras Tafari. But that had no effect upon this man. Ras Guksah’s camp, Debra Tabor, was two days’ journey to the eastward. We were pressed for time anyway, and a three or four day delay was not to be thought of if there was any way to avoid

## Savage Abyssinia

it. We pointed out to the customs man that if he held us up he would be making a serious mistake—the mistake of his life. We were fairly sure he was after a bribe, and Bailey, Cutting and I—Osgood and Fuertes with their part of the caravan were on the west side of Lake Tsana at that time—were in favor of pushing on through, regardless. There were fifteen guns in our outfit and we thought the customs people could be faced down. But Ashagri and Abogaz, the interpreter who had been loaned to us by Ras Hailu, counseled against such tactics.

“There is just a chance that Ras Guksah has issued such orders and, if so, the customs officer is only doing his duty. Furthermore, he has the power to call out every man in the district, and the first thing we know we’ll have a regular war on our hands.”

We followed their advice and camped by a stream a mile from the village. Then I made up my mind to take the interpreter and ride to Debra Tabor and report the affair to Ras Guksah; to be sure that at least one customs dog-in-the-manger got his deserts. The interpreter asked for a guide to Debra Tabor.

“My people will be eating their noonday meal soon and I couldn’t give you a guide until four o’clock”—it was then eleven in the morning and we knew when four o’clock came there would be an-



GALLA SHIFTAS HOLD UP THE CARAVAN



THE GALLA RAIDER IS NOT UNHANDSOME





## Shiftas—Difficulties of Travel

other excuse. We announced our intention of going without one. While preparations for the long ride were being made, canteens filled, saddle bags provisioned, that aggravating person intimated to Abogaz that perhaps, if money changed hands, the caravan would be allowed to proceed. That made me more determined than ever to give Ras Guksah the straight of it.

The interpreter and I set out. We knew the general direction and had not gone more than a mile before an underling of the bribe demander came running after, yelling at the top of his lungs. We kept right on. In another mile he overtook us:

"Come back," he panted. "My master wants to see you. He will let you go on your way."

"Too late," we snapped. "Run along now and tell him that a report of this affair goes straight to Ras Guksah, and you might suggest to your master that if he's got a clean shamma lying around anywhere he would do well to dust it off and get ready because he'll be summoned before his chief in a few days."

The man "ishi"d and went back.

We found a small boy in a field whom we hired to guide us. It was a steep, rocky trail, for Ras Guksah's seat is high in the mountains. The day was very hot. About three o'clock in the afternoon we were climbing through a steep canyon with high

## Savage Abyssinia

perpendicular walls when we met a messenger carrying a letter in the usual forked stick. With him was an old man riding a mule, followed by two zebanias carrying guns. We recognized the mail carrier as the man we had sent with a letter to Ras Guksah four days before—when we first entered his territory. In that letter we had explained to the chief of Amhara why we could not pass through Debra Tabor to see him; that our time was too limited. The letter carrier was bringing back an answer from Ras Guksah with letters to three chiefs in the Simien country—letters that helped us immensely in dealing with the people in our hunt for the ibex upon those dizzy heights.

The old man on the mule had been sent with his gunbearing escort to accompany us clear to Simien, to make sure that all villages near which we camped, brought the usual gifts of food,—Ras Guksah's hospitality. Debra Tabor was still far away and if we continued on to the village, it would mean four days' delay to the caravan.

"Is there any one in Debra Tabor who can read English?" I asked the old man.

"Yes," he answered, "Ras Guksah has such a man in his employ."

I could tell the bribery story better in a letter than I could through Abogaz, interpreter, whose command of English was just enough to get along

## Shiftas—Difficulties of Travel

with and that was about all. And with Ras Guksah's personal representative now with us, we could be sure of having no further trouble. So back to camp we went, arriving about dark.

On the way we stopped to interview the supercilious customs official. We rode into the village and drew up in front of his grass hut. It was a dirty place, one of the dirtiest we had seen. A slave met us at the door.

"Tell your master to come out here. We have a few things to say to him," ordered the personal representative of Ras Guksah.

"Oh, but my master is eating. He is a proud man. He never lets any one disturb him while he is having dinner."

"You go in and tell him that Garasmatch Salassy, direct from Ras Guksah, wants to see him at once!"

The slave bowed and re-entered the tukul. In a minute he was back:

"My master is sick. He cannot see you."

The interpreter and I were for going in and dragging him out by the short hairs, but the old man, grinning in his white beard, like a sun-burned Foxy Grandpa, chuckled:

"No need to bother. He's had a bad chill and I don't blame him. Ras Guksah will put him in chains for this and he knows it. Leave him to Ras Guksah—that's best."

## Savage Abyssinia

And when Salassy left us, weeks later, he took with him a letter giving the case in detail. We heard afterward that the man had been recalled to Debra Tabor. What happened to him there was probably—as we sometimes say—a-plenty.

There is no fixed charge at the customs posts. The head negahdi, or negahdrass, of a caravan is assessed what the customs people think they can get. The payment usually ranges between a dollar, Abyssinian, for two mule loads and a dollar per load.

Between Gondar and Addis Ababa are more than twelve customs houses. How a negahdi carrying hides to Addis can make ends meet is a miracle. In fact, they probably do not for they have no way of figuring their time, the overhead on mules and pack saddles and such incidentals. The life of a negahdi, one of constant travel over the rough trails, is a calling without reward; a series of impositions by a multitude of customs people, wrangles with village Shums and outrages by shiftas. The trade of Abyssinia is nipped in the bud—it dies a-borning. On some of the main caravan routes days, sometimes a week, pass, without meeting a single pack-train.

Customs form one of the main sources of income for the Rassas and Dejasmatches and it would seem impossible for Ras Tafari to do away with the

## Shiftas—Difficulties of Travel

throttling system; the chiefs would never consent and, until the central authority becomes much stronger, the present deplorable system will, in all likelihood, continue. And there can never be any real trade in the interior with such insurmountable obstacles in the way.





## CHAPTER VII

### TREKKING TO THE ARRUSI NYALA HUNT

**T**HERE is a saying in Addis Ababa that no caravan ever got off the day it was supposed to leave. We, of course, expected to be the exception to prove the rule; we were not. The Abyssinian weakness for discussion, argument, wrangling and pointless talk, descended upon us in a storm—almost cyclonic in its fury—on the morning of our planned departure.

There were many small things that had to be added to the equipment. One man had lost his waterbag, which, according to trail custom, must be furnished. Another had mislaid—or sold—the cartridges for his model 1878 “gas-pipe” gun; what would an armed zebania amount to without ammunition? Even though the gun was more dangerous to the man who shot it than to any shifta who might be the target. A few more pots and pans were needed; other small items must be attended to. Mohammed and Ashagri pointed out that another day would be needed to accomplish these matters. The second interpreter we had hired, Dabba Birru, who was really in charge of the men, being over

## Savage Abyssinia

both Mohammed and Ashagri, was consulted. But he, like the others, was loath to leave Addis. It would take another day.

The next morning, after everything, as far as we knew, had been attended to, and there seemed to be no reason why we should not start, Mohammed suddenly discovered that the caravan was planning to depart into the wilderness without spades. He was horrified and through Looloo, interpreter, explained that at least two spades must be taken. We could not imagine what use spades would be and the reply came back:

"Oh, sir, what would we do if some of the men should die?—and no spades to bury them!"

Mohammed was laughed to scorn but he acquired two spades nevertheless, with money advanced for extra packropes.

However, there is an end to everything, even the senseless bickering of Abyssinian caravan men when they wish to postpone departure one more day. By two in the afternoon the forty mules were packed and the long line wound through the gate of the compound and filed along the rocky paths of Addis bound for the Arrusi country seven or eight days' trek to the southward. Dabba, who turned out to be a reliable man, was in complete charge until we should overtake the caravan three days later at Modjo. We could finish many small details, catch



RAS TAFARI'S LION CUB



SMOKING OUT WILD BEES



HARTEBEEST



WILD GALLAS COME TO HAVE A  
LOOK AT THE WHITE MEN



## Trekking to the Arrusi

up on correspondence and take train to Modjo, joining them there.

Riding over the high plateau in the cool air of morning, the mules strung out for a mile along the trail, men singing and joking with each other, was distinctly exhilarating. Once clear of Addis, they fell into their jobs with enthusiasm. When camp was made, tents went up in quick time. Cook fires were going before the mules were unpacked and as we usually camped at noon or shortly after, a hot lunch would be served on the folding table in one of the tents. Four or five hours' march with our heavy loads was all the mules could stand over a long period of time. Everything was new and interesting: Strange birds—a hundred species all new to us—were seen along the trail, and Bailey and Fuertes did much collecting on the march. We had not yet arrived in a game locality and almost no animals were seen for the first few days after leaving Modjo. The country was rolling and beautiful but there was some thornbush, many villages and extensive cultivation.

Our first taste of Abyssinian customs methods came not far from the Hawash river the day we left Modjo. The forty pack mules were strung out for a long distance and our only reliable interpreter, Dabba, and Osgood with the passes, were well toward the rear. We were new and, like Babes in

## Savage Abyssinia

the Woods, innocent of customs post usage. The head of the caravan came abreast a cluster of tukuls, and a group of barefooted, armed men swarmed out, blocked the trail and seized the leading pack mules. A stream of yells and wild gestures lent a mystifying accompaniment to their actions. Cutting and I in the lead, not understanding a word of Amharic, were at a loss to know what to make of such crazy tactics. Neither interpreter was near and our men jabbered, fought and wrestled with the armed strangers until we expected some one to begin shooting.

Three burly ruffians seized the bridle of the cook's mule. The cook, Hussein, laid about him with his whip. More armed men came tumbling from the straw huts and the cook was dragged from his mule. One lusty newcomer aimed a swing with his gun-butt at the cook's head, but fortunately missed. Cutting and I began to think that perhaps we had already arrived among the shiftas. By this time the opposition had grown to at least fifty, and we knew that the last thing to do was to pull a gun. More of our men arrived and promptly mixed up in it. Why there were no broken heads, I don't know. But the worst of it was the loud, wild, excited, almost hysterical deluge of strange language. Every man on both sides was yelling at the top of his voice. It was bedlam! The cook's mule, in the mêlée, jerked



## Trekking to the Arrusi

away, or was turned loose by one of the assailants, and, with bridle reins flying, disappeared on a dead run around the side of the hill with two or three of the armed crowd after him afoot.

Dabba arrived and, singling out the chief, managed to get him aside, stop his yelling and showed our passports. The chief took off his turban when the seal of Ras Tafari was exposed and kept it off until the paper was folded up. As Dabba read, the other's face changed expression as if by magic; it lost that murderous look and he smiled ingratiatingly and stepped forward to stroke Dabba's chin—an Abyssinian gesture of apology. Those of our force who had been pinioned and held were freed and we were allowed to pass.

It then developed that the cook's mule could not be caught. The pursuers returned with the information that the mule had disappeared in the thornbush and further search was useless. The customs chief was told that if the mule was not found a man would be dispatched to Addis at once to report that a robbery had been committed. At that disquieting threat any lingering ideas the customs people may have been entertaining of keeping the mule hidden in the bush until we gave it up for lost, went glimmering. The chief issued orders on the spot for every man in his gang of ruffians to go after that mule; in ten minutes the mule was returned.

## Savage Abyssinia

Camp that afternoon was pitched on the south side of the Hawash river, in a wide natural meadow in the cool and refreshing shade of magnificent wild fig trees. And as the sun dipped toward the western hills and shadows lengthened, it was hard to realize that we were not in an English park. Dawn was beautiful. The sun rises about six o'clock at that time of year and as the red fire of the tropic sun gilded the heavens, hundreds of doves and wild pigeons began calling from the foliage of the giant fig trees. It was as calm and peaceful a situation as could be conceived. And as the daylight grew, cranes, herons, ducks, geese and ibises saluted the coming day in a great clamor. Goliath herons, the largest of the heron family, with wings spreading nine feet, rose in long orderly lines. They flapped lazily to a great altitude, then sailed and circled, long necks outstretched, uttering a wild, piercing cry. The neighboring marshes were alive with birds—for the river was near. The surrounding country was like an aviary; and every bird was new to us, for African birds are not found in North or South America. Francolins, a fine, hardy species of game bird, resembling our prairie chicken, or pinnated grouse, called back and forth from the brush. Guinea fowl chattered. And at intervals a strange, liquid note issued from a dense thicket of thorn nearby; unlike any bird note we had ever heard: It

## Trekking to the Arrusi

sounded like the gurgling of water being poured from a deep jug.

Breakfast was over, the mules packed and everything ready by seven-thirty. The men were buckling to their duties energetically; tentboys were learning the intricacies of folding tables and chairs, syces were beginning to understand that U. S. Army saddles should not be cinched on backwards and with a little coaching, the caravan was taking on the air of a real trail outfit. The packers finished wrestling with the last few demon mules and Ashagri, resplendent in heavy cartridge belt, curly hair romping over his head like the topknot of a black hoopoo bird, blew a ringing blast on his native trumpet and the packtrain was off.

A few tall Gallas, regular savages, leaned upon spears and watched as we wound through a belt of thorn forest. They said nothing; simply stood waiting like statues. Just before we passed from view, they swarmed down to the camp site, eagerly searching the ground for empty cartridges—brass shells pass for money anywhere in the Galla country. And natives will follow for hours waiting for a shot to be fired and a cartridge to be ejected. The evening before, Bailey and I had shot some small birds, wild pigeons, francolins and guineas, in the brush near camp and while threading our way through the trees we could look back and see two or three

## Savage Abyssinia

lean, spear-carrying blacks shadowing us. They never came close and kept out of sight as much as they could, but we knew they were always somewhere around. The Gallas in that section were perfectly harmless but at dusk the silence and aloofness of those black shadows kept us alert; there was little chance to feel lonesome. The Hawash Gallas wore nothing but a skin thrown over one shoulder and appeared simple and untutored enough, but we noticed that our men never left camp alone—always in threes and fours.

That day's march was about twenty miles and took seven hours. It was longer than we cared to force the pack mules so early in the trip, but marches must be measured by the location of water and the Kallata river was the first. The sun was strong during the middle of the day, but the mules plodded steadily ahead and the men, barefooted on the sharp rocks, kept up cheerfully. We climbed a high divide that must have been eight miles long, a gradual slope of white limestone and very hot. At the top came the first clear view of what we took to be Mount Chillalo, due south. It was a spectacle of grandeur with its lower slopes clothed in scattered thornbush and its higher elevations hidden in the clouds.

Our plan was to keep to the east of Chillalo until opposite its middle section, then to climb directly

## Trekking to the Arrusi

up. To do this we must pass through a village called Sere, a place with an evil reputation. As Fritz Ehms, a German pioneer at Modjo, put it:

“Dem Sere natives is no goot! Dey steal from you. Dey run off your mools at night. Dey get your men drhunk. Dey raise hell mit your caravan. Camp shoost ass far away from Sere ass iss pozibul.” Fritz was a fine type of pioneer with his little farm and had given us much good advice. We intended to be prepared for unpleasant developments by the time we should reach Sere.

Before we made the Kallata that afternoon the trail became terribly rough. Deep fissures had been worn in the lime rock by the hoofs of countless mules and the feet of generations of savage travelers. There was but one way down that steep canyon side. Packs scraped and rubbed. Two mules were pushed off and came within an ace of going clean over the side; if they had, their packs would have been a total loss, not to mention the mules themselves. With luck we got through right side up. After the worst was over, Ashagri remarked thoughtfully that it was customary in that place to unload and let the packs down with ropes.

While camped at the Kallata we met the war party of mounted Galla spearmen referred to in a former chapter.

The trail up the south side of the canyon was not



## Savage Abyssinia

so rough and steep and once on top a wide, beautiful plain stretched eastward and south, mile after mile, level, and dotted with thornbush. A few round grass tukuls occupied the tops of conical hills in the plain and native women with jars of water were on the way back and forth from a waterhole to the villages upon the hills. Far across the plains, the village of Sere could be seen at a great distance, shimmering in the bright sunlight upon the very top of an escarpment about five hundred feet high, almost perpendicular. The trail up, we found, was zigzag and breakneck, strewn with huge boulders. The village was surrounded by a stone wall—a strong situation in case of attack. A show of force would not come amiss when passing through Sere and each of us carried a rifle on his saddle and was particular to have his gunbearer close behind with another. Two syces carried conspicuously leather guncases—they were empty, for all the guns were on display, but added to the general warlike appearance. But our large caravan with its sixteen armed zebanias must have been discouraging and a source of disappointment to the inhabitants for we passed through without incident.

By reputation the men of Sere do a thriving business exacting toll from native caravans traveling between Sidamo in the south and Addis Ababa to the northward. The headman of the village looked





BEAUTIFUL LONG-CURVED HORNS OF THE NYALA



AS BEAUTIFUL AND GRACEFUL AS HE IS RARE



## Trekking to the Arrusi

us over critically. He was a frowning, lowbrowed individual and his face registered extreme displeasure while the caravan filed by—but he spoke no word. It was better to hold the pack mules to their work two hours longer than to run chances of entanglement with the Sere natives by camping near the village and we kept on to a high hill before giving the order to stop.

The mountain that rose almost due south, which we supposed to be Chillalo, was our objective and the next morning we engaged a local native to go with us that far; he claimed to know water locations and to have at his fingers' ends a short route. Our maps showed the great peak to be Chillalo; the interpreters assured us that natives with whom they talked along the trail, confirmed this. The guide added his assurances. But in the early afternoon, when the pack mules were becoming weary, the truth came out: Two skin-clad spearmen came by and answered the interpreter's question with the name—Albasso. The guide was called and stoutly maintained that the savages were wrong. But when those two, now becoming indignant, assured us that they had lived all their lives at its base and pointed with long spears to another mountain, far to the westward and called that Chillalo, the guide admitted that he might easily be wrong but waved an expansive arm by way of expressing what was evi-

## Savage Abyssinia

dently in his mind: "What difference does it make? Why quibble over a little thing like a mountain?"

We held a council of war and decided it would be well to try Albasso before moving on—now that we were almost there. Nyala had been reported on Albasso and the two spearmen assured us this was correct. So continuing up the grassy slope, the caravan entered a narrow valley near the head of a clear mountain stream. The packs were pulled off and fires started when ten or a dozen Gallas, leaning on long lances, appeared upon a hilltop overlooking the camp. The sun was setting and the air was taking on that crisp quality noticeable in the evening at eight or nine thousand feet even in the tropics. The level floor of the valley lay in deep shadow. It was a wild and rarely beautiful spot with a hint of Alpine pastures in its small, bright flowers and curling, waving grass. The statuesque figures upon the hill gave it the finishing touch of the wilderness: It was highland Africa, remote, mysterious, unknown.

In tones that carried a great distance with remarkable clarity the figures, sharply outlined upon the hill in the level rays of the dying sun, called down in Galla:

"They warn us not to camp here," Looloo, who understood Galla, interpreted. "They order us to go on to the next water."

## Trekking to the Arrusi

"Tell them to come down and talk it over."

Looloo called back, but they only answered with a long harangue and remained where they were.

"They want to know who we are and what we are doing here."

"Tell them we don't talk with people a quarter of a mile away. If they want to know, let them come and find out."

They refused and for a half hour remained upon the hilltop hallooing and shaking spears. Looloo explained that they were afraid to come into camp:

"They think we are out stealing cattle or maybe men. They have had experience and are taking no chances." But at dark they moved off and we heard no more from them.

The next day's march was a steady climb. The lower slopes of Albasso were gentle and gradual, but as the day wore on the going became rougher and steeper. The flora changed as the higher altitudes were reached: Giant thistles, twenty feet high with great balls of down on the ends of long stems, began to appear. Stunted cedar trees, twisted by the wind into strange shapes became common and we camped early that afternoon well toward the top of one spur of the mountain; the aneroid showed ten thousand seven hundred feet. An altitude at which nyala might be found.

The site was ideal from a hunter's standpoint.

## Savage Abyssinia

One of the main ridges of Albasso loomed just beyond. Camp was in a hollow—the light of fires and the reflection of tents could not be seen from any great distance and the main peak rising above to thirteen thousand and fifty feet—as we ascertained later by the aneroid—was easily accessible. The vegetation between camp and the summit was curious: A growth of what may be called tree heath, an evergreen stunted to bush size, six or seven feet, covered the spurs, ridges and ravines of the upper reaches; thick in places, thin in others while some ridges were bare. By weaving in and out, following openings and rocky ridges it would be possible to ride a strong mule to the summit; for the slopes of Albasso are not precipitous and canyons and cliffs may be circled.

But the peak itself was almost continually veiled in clouds and mist which at times extended halfway down the slopes. Judging from trees lower down, from their moss-hung branches and from the luxuriant, almost riotous grass, there is much rain upon Albasso. It was cool, even in the sun—and water froze nightly in a bucket.

Bailey and I went out that afternoon more to look over the country than to hunt, but after a climb of two hours came to a narrow highland valley, bare of brush but deep in grass. Across, where the heath brush began again, a quarter of a mile away, Bailey's



## Trekking to the Arrusi

quick eye caught a movement. We could distinguish nothing for a time but eventually a large animal stirred and we could make out a dim shape which appeared to be about the size of a wapiti, or elk. Close watching showed others—they could be nothing but nyala! The wind was in the right quarter and we planned a careful stalk, a detour to cross the open valley lower down behind a jutting point: nyala, we knew, were scarce and shy and this fortunate chance upon the first day was not to be thrown away by carelessness and overeagerness. We took our time and succeeded in crossing the valley unseen. Once in the thick brush upon the other side, we breathed easier, creeping low to a small ridge: We saw three cow nyala and two fawns lying in the edge of the brush, heads and necks in plain view. They were perhaps four hundred yards. It was a disappointment to find the small herd without a bull, but the museum wanted a family group and we hoped to get from this herd at least one cow and fawn, possibly two cows and a fawn; but above all, at least one fawn—for the fawns are always hardest to shoot: They are so small, can disappear so quickly and run in such erratic jumps that killing a fawn is often largely a matter of luck—and they are a great addition to a group.

Sun helmets came off and we crawled forward on

## Savage Abyssinia

hands and knees to a place where the brush ended abruptly and there was nothing between us and the game but open meadow a hundred and thirty or forty yards across. The nyala were wary. Their attitude was one of extreme alertness, wide ears spread from narrow heads like fans, while eyes were fixed upon the valley outspread before them. And they were lying at the very edge of the dense tree heath—where a single bound would put them out of sight in the all-concealing brush. It was therefore almost imperative to make sure of the first shot. But they were too keen for us. Before we were sure that a closer shot was out of the question, they bounded to their feet, whirled, and were in the brush. The fawns as usual, disappeared like magic and we never caught so much as a glimpse of them again. Springfields came to shoulders instantly and as one cow crossed an opening I fired three times but she vanished, apparently unhurt. At the same time Bailey had caught the flash of a tawny hide and he too had opened up. A wall of rock forming the opposite side of the narrow valley threw back the sound of shots with redoubled volume, and for seconds the deep silence of that high mountain pasture was ripped and shattered in a way that was startling. With guns ready, we watched for another chance but saw not even the tops of the bushes move. Absolute silence again settled over the valley.

## Trekking to the Arrusi

"Well, of all the quick disappearing acts!" Bailey observed. "But I think I hit one."

"I may have hit one, too."

And we walked across the opening and entered the brush. Bailey turned off to the left in the direction taken by his animal. I swung to the right where I had last seen mine. Soon came a rattle of gravel and a noise of scrambling not over thirty yards ahead and my wounded cow, the top of a gray head and wide ears showing above the brush, dashed headlong. It had to be a snap shot, but she went down and this time stayed down. As I stood admiring the harnesslike markings on the gray sides and back, the long slim legs and finely modeled nose with its white stripe, a shot rang out from Bailey's direction and he called down that he had gotten his.

We had not taken any of the men that afternoon and as I was skinning out my specimen, Bailey appeared. His face was long and he was a chagrined and disappointed hunter:

"My specimen is ruined. It was a fine cow, but the bullet took her, as she ran through the brush, in the back of the head. All I had to shoot at was moving, shaking brush and I shot too high." It was one of those unfortunate breaks of luck that couldn't be helped.

From what I had seen of the country, it appeared

## Savage Abyssinia

to be quite feasible to hunt mounted, that is, to make a long climb with the mule doing the work until arriving in a likely neighborhood and then to dismount and send the mule back by a syce, hunting from there afoot. Such tactics enable the hunter to cover much more territory: It had proved to be a good method upon elk hunts in the open timbered mountains of Wyoming and it should work here. So the next morning, Zuleka, my syce, brought up the saddle mule. I had the Springfield, which was sufficient, in the scabbard. But Zuleka, having carried the .375 Hoffman—loaned to the expedition by Kermit Roosevelt—on the trail, begged so hard to be allowed to carry it again this day that I let him: Our boys were not allowed to shoot, of course, but Abyssinians infinitely prefer to lug a heavy gun all day, up hill and down, to being without one; it is a mark of great distinction. The uphill work began as soon as we left camp and upon every ridge or point of vantage I dismounted and went forward for a careful view of the country. But nothing seemed to be astir, although francolins of two new varieties, one the size of our Wisconsin partridge and the other almost as large as a Mongolian pheasant, boomed up ahead of us. Big flocks darted out of the way with the speed of jackrabbits; that part of Mount Albasso seemed to be alive with them. They are hardy and excellent game birds with bright



DRYING NYALA MEAT



REMOTE, MYSTERIOUS, UNKNOWN AFRICA





## Trekking to the Arrusi

red legs, red bills and bodies russet and mottled like those of Bob White quail. They whirred into the air with the dash and bullet flight of quail, ascended about a hundred feet, swung away in a wide arc and sailed down wind, ideal for shotgun work. But we were not interested in francolins. It was bull nyala or nothing.

By one o'clock in the afternoon we had climbed almost to the peak of Albasso and were following a ridge which led to an outcrop of rock that reared high into a cathedral eminence. It appeared from where we were to be the very summit—but we found later that one spur a hundred or two hundred feet higher rose to the southward. We had stopped to rest the mule, winded from the steep climb. I looked ahead toward the rocky eminence and saw a tiny, grassy park enclosed in a half circle by rugged cliffs and huge boulders fallen from the heights above. It was a miniature amphitheater, and for several minutes I sat admiring the unusual shape and wild beauty of the place. Three gray rocks that appeared to have, at some former time, rolled down from the cliff and found lodgment, were near the center of the little mountain park—but as I watched, one of them moved—nyala!

Pulling the mule back over the ridge out of sight and giving strict orders to Zuleka to remain with him over the brow, I crawled back, and lying be-

## Savage Abyssinia

hind a rock, could distinguish through the glass the tall lyre-shaped horns of three bulls. They were fully five hundred yards, but even at that distance the glass showed that one was considerably larger than the others, heavier and blockier. The wind was blowing from them to me, but the ground between was free from brush and there were not enough large boulders to allow a direct stalk. The small park could have been approached easily from the other side, but the wind, which usually blows with force upon elevated mountain tops, was driving in a gale and that side was out of the question. I studied the lay of the land and decided finally that the only way was to follow the off-side of the ridge we were then on, until abreast of the game. Then to approach directly cross wind from the right. Three or four boulders, large as small houses, could be kept in line with the grazing animals until a position well within range was reached. There was the one difficulty of wind, however. If there should be—as appeared quite likely—an eddy surging around that rocky amphitheater, it would carry my scent ahead. But such a chance had to be taken. It was the only way.

While I had been busily studying the situation through the glass, Zuleka, his curiosity becoming too strong, had climbed back to the top of the ridge and was standing in full sight of the nyala, bridle

## Trekking to the Arrusi

reins in hand and the mule's head and ears looming up over the ridge. Had the bulls been as alert as the cows of the day before, Zuleka would certainly have spoiled all chances for a shot. He was sent back behind the ridge and there I turned loose upon him with a vocabulary, unfortunately, limited to a dozen Amharic words. But he understood that if he did such a thing again, he would be sent to Addis the next day: With such rare specimens in sight—to have a black syce spoil things merely from curiosity would be more than angels could put up with.

The glass had shown that nyala bulls were much larger and heavier animals than cows, and I took the .375. The Springfield was powerful enough—but I wanted to drop the big one in his tracks and secure a second before they could dash around the encircling rocks. That second shot would have to be quick for the little park was not more than fifty yards across, a few jumps and the gray volcanic rocks would hide them from view.

This time Zuleka stayed where he was. I ascended the ridge until on a level with the park and, keeping a big boulder in line, managed to arrive within sixty yards without being seen. The largest bull was facing, head down, grazing. It was an ideal position: the .375, if held right, would break his neck. At the shot the big bull crumpled

## Savage Abyssinia

in his tracks—went down as if pole-axed, and I knew he was finished. Three animals instead of two—there had been a fourth unseen behind the rocks—leaped across the opening like gray streaks. Before shooting I had established the exact location of the next largest, but by the time I was sure the first shot had done its work and dared to shift eyes from the big bull, the others had reached the rocks opposite and one had disappeared. A snap shot knocked another down, but he was on his feet again instantly and in two more jumps was out of sight. I ran across the velvety grass, scrambled upon a rock and was just in time to see the wounded fugitive entering a clump of the inevitable tree heath. The next was an unusually lucky shot. It kept him down for good.

One of the others, somewhat smaller, stopped further on to look back. But there was no use killing a third at that time of day. We were a great way from camp, Zuleka knew little about skinning and I would have most of it to do myself. Two big bulls were all that could be managed and saved before dark. I did not shoot again.

Zuleka caught on rapidly and we had the skins off in quick time, but there was then not more than three hours of daylight. The mule was hobbled with stirrup straps and for another half hour of valuable time we fought with him to load the speci-

## Trekking to the Arrusi

mens. He reared and plunged and bucked and threw himself and we finally gave it up. There was nothing to do then but to leave Zuleka with the hides, with orders to remain until I returned early in the morning with carriers. Hyenas must be kept away during the night, and, after daylight, vultures and eagles. I left with him one of the rifles, ammunition and a full box of safety matches. He had plenty of nyala meat and with a big fire going should have no trouble. The altitude—thirteen thousand feet—was much too high for lions.

At daylight the next morning, Fuertes and I set out with six husky mule loaders to pack in specimens and meat. It was a wet morning and before long a driving rain set in, chilling and miserable. Every foot of the way was up hill, and before we reached the vicinity of the peak, fog and mist shut down and we groped our way through wet brush, unable to see more than a hundred yards through the fog. The men were discouraged, convinced that the place could not be found under such conditions. Fortunately, the fog cleared a bit and through a rift appeared the high cliff surrounding the amphitheater. Fifteen minutes later we were there—Zuleka had gone!

The skins were grouped together and folded and a big rock rolled upon them. They had not yet been touched by bird or beast, but as we arrived, two



## Savage Abyssinia

ravens were waddling up to investigate. Nothing but the thick blanket of fog that had been such a trial to us had saved them from the beaks of eagles, vultures and ravens. Soon the sky would be black with birds of prey. We arrived just in time. There was no evidence of Zuleka's fire.

Squatting in a ring around the carcasses, the hungry men gorged themselves on raw meat, whacking off great slices with long knives. This was the first time we had seen them eat raw meat, and they kept glancing over shoulders, a little ashamed, like boys caught with fingers in the jam pot.

The skies had cleared when we arrived in camp and Zuleka, we found, had been there since mid-morning. He had stayed with the skins until daylight, but when the fog shut down became certain that we could not find the place again and, leaving the specimens as secure as possible, had hurried in, as he said, to pilot me back. Zuleka did not turn out very well and this is the last time he appears in the narrative in an important rôle. I asked why we had not found the ashes of his watch fire, and after much laughter, the interpreter explained that he had used up all the safety matches trying to strike them on the rocks.



## CHAPTER VIII

### EASTWARD DOWN THE RIVER WABBI SHEBELI

**T**HAT first camp upon Mount Albasso was a stroke of great luck. After mistaking the mountain for Chillalo and finding ourselves almost obliged to camp there against our will, four nyala—three excellent specimens within two days was surely better than we deserved. And within the next two days Bailey brought in another bull, younger and slightly smaller than the others, but needed for the group. Osgood added another doe on the fourth day and the group was complete: A fawn would have been an addition but was by no means necessary and we never had a chance at one.

Reedbuck, duiker, klipspringer, a species of oribi (*oribi gallarum*), peculiar to the Arrusi, black bushbuck (*T. scriptus meneliki*), found nowhere but upon the high ranges of south Abyssinia, were collected at that first camp. Within a week the possibilities of the locality had been exhausted and camp was moved around the mountainside to the south-eastward, to the magnificent Tichu forest; a belt of great trees extending along the eastern slope from

## Savage Abyssinia

nine thousand up to eleven thousand feet altitude. Never, anywhere, had we seen such trees—except in paintings. Giant cedars, perhaps a thousand years old, straight as lances reared heads a hundred feet, some with gnurly trunks twisted grotesquely, and all of immense size, thirty or forty feet around the base; hoary and moss-hung. Wild olive, low but spreading to great width were scattered here and there through the forest. Strange, blossoming trees grew thickly in the ravines, making those deeper parts almost jungle-like. And between the larger trees the ground was carpeted with thick grass, knee high.

That was a glorious camp high up on the east side of Albasso. The wide reaches of the Arrusi plateau lay outspread below in the sunlight, mottled and streaked with dark cloud shadows. Local storms could be seen to gather, concentrate and pour their flood upon the thirsty earth far below and sometimes fifty miles away across the plains. The mountain sloped down to the grassy prairie in a series of ridges and deep canyons, gradually verging and blending into the level of the plain. And far to the southward the tawny sea of grass tumbled into the abyss—the deep canyon of the Wabbi Shebeli.

The nights in that high Arrusi country were things of wonder and mysterious beauty. At sun-

## Down the River Wabbi Shebeli

set, about six o'clock, the mules were rounded up, driven in and picketed to a line stretched at the lower end of camp. The two zebanias on first night guard lit tiny watch fires, one on each side of the picket line and prepared for their long, cold vigil. Supper was served by the tentboys beneath a fly in the shelter of an ancient tree. The men had many small fires in their section of camp where they prepared their own supper, squatting in small groups. Some one, accounted a vocalist of note among his fellows, would pipe up, improvising words to a wierd, Abyssinian tune—a low, minor chant. Sometimes the words were humorous, for they brought much laughter; at others sad, for the men remained silent, deeply thoughtful. The first singer might continue for fifteen minutes, when the song would be answered from another fire some distance away. Far into the night the chanting sometimes continued; first from one little group or coterie of sitters, then from another.

The mules stood quietly in the dark. There was no nipping and kicking as there would be with fifty horses fastened closely together. They were perfectly content to be tied, for they—wise animals—knew that the picket line was the only safe place for them after dark; hard to catch during daylight hours, they meekly allowed themselves to be taken, once darkness settled over the mountain. Constel-

## Savage Abyssinia

lations, strange to northern eyes, began the stately march toward the west. As fires burned to ashes, chanting ceased and the men crawled beneath small shelter tents. Only the two watch fires of the zebanias remained as the hour approached nine and new stars appeared over the eastern plains, burning red but growing paler as they neared the zenith.

Strange birds with wild cries called out in the darkness. Answering cries came from the depths of the forest. A hyena far away howls in that deep and abruptly ending throaty sound that hints of powerful lungs and a huge chest. A jackal yaps interminably, like a coyote, endeavoring to make up in repetition what he lacks in volume.

A night wind springs up and the trees rustle, bowing and nodding in the breeze. A zebania throws more wood upon his fire and croons softly to himself. In the flareup of light the eyes of the mules gleam like coals fanned by a high wind; but the pack animals make no sound—glad of the protection of human beings. The strange forest cries die out and within the black wall of woods all is silent. And so the hours of night passed in tune with the silent tramp of the constellations.

The sky above the far flung verge of the eastern plains begins to glow as from a prairie fire burning leagues and leagues below the horizon. Faint streaks of light, like giant fingers, reach heavenward

## Down the River Wabbi Shebeli

as if to clutch the pale, retreating stars. Red wisps of cloud drift aimlessly above the rim of the distant plain; rudderless ships burning upon a sea of silver. Then the whole thing—a masterpiece of artistry, gathers momentum; it is as if the floodgates of some limitless reservoir of light had burst and pale beams were rushing forth on a resistless tide. And now comes the sun—a red general in the midst of his legions—heaving himself slowly and cumbrously over the edge of the world.

As at a pre-arranged signal the voices of the forest awaken. Birds call excitedly, as if this wonder were something new, something undreamed of before. A rustling of wings in the trees overhead and a faint cooing announce that the earliest doves are gathering to discuss the momentous questions of the day. A raven flaps across the face of the flushed and glowing sun. The night chill relaxes and a genial warmth penetrates forest and tent and the grass, heavy and bent with its load of dew glistens and sparkles like the surface of a lake. A continuous and suggestive nickering comes from the picket line. The cook's fire blazes brightly—and the day has begun.

Before leaving Addis we had planned to divide the party temporarily; Fuertes and Osgood were anxious to investigate the mysteries of the Jumm-Jumm forest, far to the southward in the province



## Savage Abyssinia

of Sidamo, while Suydam Cutting, Bailey and I were eager to strike eastward, cross the wide Arrusi plains and follow the course of the river Wabbi Shebeli to the lower, hotter country in the direction of the Somali border: For in that area we expected to find zebra, oryx, gerunhuk, greater and lesser kudu, waterbuck, hartebeest and gazelle. And the caravan had been arranged with this end in view: There were two head mule men; Mohammed and Ashagri. Two interpreters, Dabba and Looloo, and two cooks, Hussein and an old man called Jebril. Our passes from Ras Tafari had been made out in duplicate and we thought, when the time should come, all that would be necessary would be to divide supplies, mules, men and equipment. But we had not taken into consideration the peculiarities of Abyssinian character and it was almost as hard to compel the men to separate as it had been to get them out of Addis Ababa.

Ashagri was to go with us, so he and Mohammed were ordered to divide the mules, pack saddles and packing equipment. This was done satisfactorily. The cooks took their own stuff. Osgood and I split supplies and Dabba selected the men to go with each party. Looloo, the wise and unreliable, was to be our interpreter; and there was nothing more to be done but to pack up and be off: These things were finished by eight o'clock in the morning. Orders



## Down the River Wabbi Shebeli

to pack were given and we expected to be away in an hour at the latest.

Twelve o'clock came and still we hadn't left. Mohammed had come forward at the last minute with a protest about the men.

"I want all the Mohammedans with me. I must look after them. They are as my children. Ashagri can take the Christians, but I must have the Mohammedans."

Then the cook who was to go with us raised a roar. He was a Mussulman and couldn't bear the thought of being the only one in the party.

"There must be enough Mussulmans with us," he cried wildly, "so I can be sure of the correct Mohammedan burial if I die. You are taking me into the desert! I have never been in the desert! I don't know what may happen!"

Next came two fine old men that Bailey had trained to skin specimens. One was slated to go with each party. But, with tears in their eyes, they pleaded so hard not to be separated that we really didn't have the heart to part them. (They cooked, ate, slept and worked together.) Our party took them both, giving one of our best men in exchange.

About 10 o'clock we thought everything was straightened out. Mohammed's request for all the Mussulmans was, of course refused with the assurance that their spiritual welfare would be carefully

## Savage Abyssinia

looked after. But at that critical period the strongest trait of Abyssinian character cropped up. In the division of personal effects, small tents, cooking pots, water bottles, a great opportunity for oratory presented itself, and no true Abyssinian would neglect such a chance.

Small groups gathered in various parts of camp, usually in a ring around some small article. One man would take the floor and the way he would loose the floodgates of verbiage would have made a sea-lawyer appear tongue-tied. Then another would reply. Back and forth the argument would go, getting nowhere. It was the most exasperating thing in the world. Finally, at 1 o'clock, Looloo came at the head of a delegation.

"We cannot leave to-day," he announced with finality. "The men have to buy food in the village."

"Ridiculous," we replied, "we are leaving to-day if only to march fifteen minutes before dark. Just make up your mind to that!"

"But the women of the village are grinding grain for us, grain which we bought yesterday."

"All right! We'll send a man for it from camp to-night."

Meanwhile a particularly hot argument over two cooking pots and a pan had been raging for an hour. I had told Dabba twice to settle it, one way or the other, and start the men packing up. He hadn't

## Down the River Wabbi Shebeli

been able to do it. So, completely exasperated, I walked into the circle of orators, looked at the two pots and the pan, worth about five cents each, gave them a disgusted kick, turned to Dabba and said:

"Now you tell these men that if their argument is not settled in two minutes I'll come out with a gun and shoot a hole through the middle of each pot and throw the source of the argument in the creek!"

The oratory ceased. The pots were distributed and everybody went away happy in about ten seconds. It wasn't the pots and the pans they cared about. It was the opportunity for flowery speech-making.

We had a long march to make, but didn't get off until 2 o'clock, and the time had been consumed almost entirely in speechmaking. The last hour, however, was devoted to leave taking. We Americans shook hands, said good-by, take care of yourself, best of luck, or something like that, and we were through.

But not so the Abyssinians. They were extremely demonstrative. They kissed, first on one cheek, then on the other. They clung to hands; they placed hands on the shoulders of a close friend and stood that way for five or ten minutes, and appeared to be really grief-stricken at the separation. I am sure that much of the delay, the unwillingness to strike

## Savage Abyssinia

tents and pack up, was the result of reluctance to leave friends. Once separated and on the trail they were perfectly happy. So far, they had given us trouble but twice, when we left Addis and again when we split the party. Both times its cause had been, I think, love of oratory and unwillingness to part with friends. They were big children.

Five monotonous days it took to cross the Arrusi plains. They seemed endless, for the view upon all sides was the same; a sea of knee-high grass waving in the wind. Not a tree appeared to offer change and rest to the eye. Small groups of Galla tukuls were scattered about the yellow landscape and occasionally herds of humped cattle in charge of a boy with a spear were passed, for this is the finest cattle country of the Galla tribe. There was no game, no birds—with the exception of ducks and geese at the waterholes. There were no roads of course, for there is not a wheeled vehicle in Abyssinia outside of Addis, but the grassy surface was crisscrossed with innumerable horse trails; the cattle raising Galla is primarily a horseman.

Upon the fifth day, however, the country became rolling; groves of wild fig trees appeared upon the skyline and the everlasting monotony of level plain was broken by valleys and ridges. Streams, rising between the hills, flowed eastward; the Arrusi plains were almost at an end. Reedbuck appeared, feeding



MAKING CAMP ON A HILL.



A WOODY CAMP UNDER A WILD FIG TREE





## Down the River Wabbi Shebeli

upon the sloping sides of valleys and then, at last, the earth fell away—down four thousand feet, almost perpendicular, to the river Wabbi Shebeli. That great cliff appearing suddenly underfoot was astounding in its steepness. The drop for the first thousand feet was vertical, then broken and cut by ridges and canyons; it seemed impossible for mules to negotiate.

But a Galla, secured from a nearby village, led the way to a terrible trail—the best and only one there was—and after three hours of steady precipitous descent we camped halfway down, two thousand feet lower. There the aneroid showed six thousand feet. We had stepped, in three hours, from the temperate zone with cool days and almost freezing nights into the torrid climate of equatorial Africa; giant euphorbias grew in the ravines, thornbush was everywhere and acacia trees flat-topped and shadeless gave the landscape the typical African appearance. Below, the deep canyon of the Wabbi stretched away to the eastward as far as the eye could follow, winding among its wild and beetling cliffs and jutting crags like Alf, the Sacred river of Xanadu; “through canyons measureless to man, down to a sunless sea.”

From the eastern end of the Arrusi escarpment to the Wabbi, a distance of ten miles, was nothing but rocks and thornbush. Candelabra cactus grew

## Savage Abyssinia

to a height of seven or eight feet. Ant hills of dried mud rose beside the trail, towering twenty feet, round like the broken trunks of trees. Few natives dwelt in this section and those we saw were quite different from the Gallas of the high land. They had a queer habit of standing on one leg with the other foot resting on the knee. At a distance they resembled storks.

One we met on the trail was a regular savage dandy, with a passionate flair for bright colors. Three heavy strings of red and yellow beads encircled his neck. His waist was encased in a half dozen more strings and the rawhide cord bearing fetiches against sickness and other misfortunes that everybody wears in Abyssinia had little packets of charms tied closely together, and hung from neck to middle. A loose, dirt-brown shamma draped his shoulders.

But the masterpiece of adornment that must have given him the most trouble—and satisfaction—was a small piece of carved wood, three or four inches wide and a half inch thick, that stood straight above his head. How he ever made it stay in that position in his short kinky hair is a mystery. But there it was, and, rising majestically from the flat, carved wooden piece, was a red feather, the length of a rooster's tail. The feather had just the right degree of stiffness, it nodded and swayed, backward and forward, at every movement of the head. It was

## Down the River Wabbi Shebeli

a tonsorial triumph and must have taken months of his valuable time to plan and whittle to proper size and shape.

Eastward, over the rocky thornbush hills, rose Mount Abu el Kasim, crowned with a pile of black lava, cast, by those ancient fires that gave it birth, into grotesque shapes; turrets, minarets and spires. It is a holy mountain and the Mohammedan Gallas of the surrounding country make pilgrimage to its summit once each year; for there, somewhere near the top, lies buried a Mohammedan saint, Abu-el-Kasim, surrounded by the graves of sheikhs high in the saint's favor in the ancient days. The mountain rises abruptly from the banks of the Wabbi and its rocky buttresses can be seen from a great distance; the one landmark in that thorny wilderness.

The Mohammedan Gallas were shy and did not trust us or our Abyssinians. The further east we progressed the more pronounced became this unpleasant trait. There were no villages, nothing more than groups of three and four tukuls off the trail, hidden deep in the thorn jungle. By this time we were far from any regular caravan route; one white man, Oscar Neumann, discoverer of Neumann's hartebeest, had passed this way twenty years before, trekking west from Somaliland. Whites, to the wild Gallas, were an unknown quantity and it was with the greatest difficulty that our men acquired meager

## Savage Abyssinia

information regarding water and trails. There was no game, for the bush was too thick. But the low country was a wonderful place for birds and ten or twelve species, new to the collection, were added each day: The bush was filled with strange bird notes; one in particular appealed to us. It had the timbre and clear ring of a silver bell. The first time it resounded from a cluster of thorn trees we thought there must be a native village beyond the hill—that some one was ringing a bell. Another bird, quite common, cried distinctly “pooh! pooh!” with a deprecating accent, following this with a long series of “poohs” lower in the scale and becoming fainter and fainter until the last was almost inaudible. Thrushes, finches, sunbirds and wrenlike busybodies were everywhere in the low thorn trees. At every camp francolins called back and forth from the brush. The kites and hawks of Abyssinia are notorious for their boldness and persistency. They attached themselves to us and hovered about camp in dozens, darting and swooping down after any food left for an instant in an exposed position. The tentboys carrying plates from the cook’s fire to the table often lost fried leg or wing of guinea fowl or francolin, snatched and carried off in the talons of some over-bold freebooter of the skies. We used to amuse ourselves by throwing small bits of meat into the air. The common brown kite especially

## Down the River Wabbi Shebeli

was agile and clever at catching them on the fly.

The steep trail down to the Wabbi at the base of Abu el Kasim practically fell off the side of the canyon; twelve hundred feet in less than a mile. A belt of open forest lined the river and as we approached, monkeys—the small gray “toto”—trailed across the openings between the trees. Wart hogs dashed into thick brush, short tails held rigid like miniature flag poles on the stern of ships. Dik-diks, no taller than a jackrabbit but perfectly formed deer bounded behind friendly bush or sheltering vine. But the Wabbi Shebeli, when we reached its banks, was in flood; bank full and running like a millrace. It was December and the rains were long past but storms in the Arrana mountains near the source of the river must have caused the unusual flow of water. There was no trail to the eastward upon the north bank and the stream must be crossed somehow unless all plans were to be given up and the caravan to retrace its steps. But a swollen, crocodile infested river is a serious matter. Not more than four or five of the men could swim, there was much valuable equipment that might be lost or ruined; specimens, ammunition, photographic supplies, food, tents, bedding, guns. And those things had to last for another five months; they could not be replaced. To make matters worse there was hardly a spear of grass for the mules. A prolonged wait for the



## Savage Abyssinia

waters to recede—even if we had the time to spare—was out of the question. It was a dismal and gloomy caravan that pitched tents beside the Wabbi that night.

Scouting up and down stream the next morning made certain the truth of the information obtained from natives; there was no other ford. Crocodiles basked on the bars just around the bends, big-snouted, scaly brutes, lying like logs but quick to plunge into the muddy waters upon the slightest unaccustomed noise. They looked to be asleep, dormant in the sun, but the speed with which they disappeared belied that assumption. We set to work upon a raft. Three dead trees were cut down, bound together with rawhide packropes and the affair launched. It was inordinately heavy—as all rafts seem to be; and would support but the weight of one man. F'yeesa Boolgoo, my tentboy, Zuleka and Birhano, and one of the best packers, Agaboru, being the only swimmers among the men, fought the swift waters all morning to get a line, made of packropes, across. After repeated failures, F'yeesa wound the loose coils upon his head in the way of a turban. The others waded out, breast deep, supporting the weight of rope against the pull of current. F'yeesa plunged in—the coil upon his head unwinding as he swam. He just managed to reach



## Down the River Wabbi Shebeli

the opposite bank and made the rope fast to a tree. In spite of our continuous shooting in the water to keep crocodiles away, he took something of a chance. But it was all to no advantage for the rope was not strong enough to hold the heavy raft against the tremendous pull of rushing waters; it broke.

In the afternoon, Ashagri and I climbed to a high shoulder of Abu el Kasim on the chance of finding a practicable route along the north bank. But that side was a series of tremendous canyons running back at right angles to the river—one after another as far as we could see—all heavy with thornbush; an impossible terrain through which to take a pack-train. Ashagri, who was always a cheerful soul, regaled me with tales of the game to be found far to the southward, in the province of Borana. With his extremely limited English vocabulary he did his best to paint the verbal picture: At length, he stopped in a small opening in the thornbush, gathered a handful of sticks, took my arm and led me to the center:

“Now,” he said, “you here.” Then in his quick, busy-bee way, rushed here and there on all sides planting the sticks in the ground. Returning from the stick planting he took my arm again:

“You here. In Borana—this Borana,” waving an arm to indicate that I should imagine myself in

## Savage Abyssinia

that distant province. Pointing to the first stick and crouching low as if stalking something, he hissed:

“Argazin—” kudu— “there. Sala” —oryx— “there”—pointing to the second. “Mayda hyah”— zebra—“there,” indicating the third. “Defassa”— waterbuck—“there.” And so on around the circle of upright sticks.

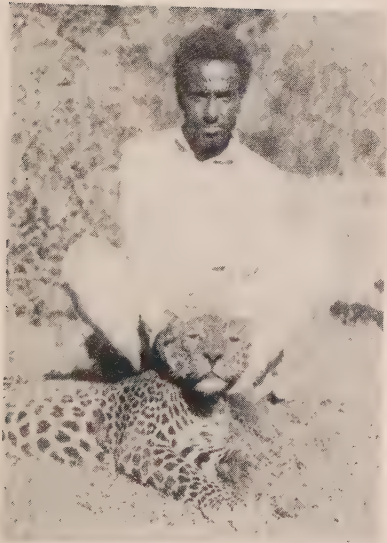
“Oh you see owrie”—game—“till you get sick in the inside!”

Ashagri's tales were always entertaining but that didn't help to solve the problem of the Wabbi. We talked it over that night and decided to wait at least a few days before making another attempt, on the chance that the flood would go down: It was the wrong season for high water and perhaps the storms above had already passed. And markers on the bank showed a slight fall, which was encouraging. There was some collecting of small stuff we wanted to do anyway in that locality so the time would not be entirely wasted. Rock hyraxes from that low altitude were desired and Ashagri asked to be allowed to sally forth after them with the shotgun.

The little man set out, gun loaded with number seven shot, followed by Asphal, the mule boy, to carry the game. Two hours later the hunters rushed into camp out of breath and greatly excited. There was no interpreter handy but that didn't stop



AS HANDSOME AS HE IS DANGEROUS



THE LEOPARD THAT ALMOST  
KILLED THE TENT-BOY WHO IS  
NOW HOLDING HIM



CARRYING THE LEOPARD HOME



## Down the River Wabbi Shebeli

Ashagri from telling the story in his usual dramatic way:

"We go," he panted with gesticulations, "through the thornbush. Thornbush all 'round. 'Woof!' something say, 'Woof!' I look with the eye"—here he indicated his right eye with forefinger—"no see. Maybeso Jib"—hyena—"I think. No, no,—no jib—it was—" Ashagri got down on hands and knees and tried to look as much like a leopard as he could. He demonstrated the cat whiskers by pulling his own mustache. He stuck up two fingers behind his head as an illustration of the short, up-standing ears. He drew imaginary small circles on his ribs to put me right as to the spots. There was no mistaking the pantomime.

"I go 'bang! bang!' He go slip." Ashagri laid hand alongside head to denote gentle sleep.

"This," he pointed to the mule boy at his heels, "he—" The raconteur didn't know the word "run," so he ran ahead a few yards to show how the boy had rushed forward.

"I say 'Yellum, yellum!'" No, no! "But he go in. Then the—the——"

"Leopard," I suggested.

"Ow! Ow!"—yes, yes—"the luppard say 'G-r-r-u-um!'" and a most terrifying gurgling growl issued from Ashagri's beard.

"He make with claw," and a demonstration of

## Savage Abyssinia

the leopard's paw clutching for the tail of the boy's shamma followed. Ashagri laughed. The boy laughed, too, but I thought a little forced—the scare was too recent for sincere mirth.

“Boy gone—oh, how he gone—tolo, tolo”—quick, quick—“in thornbush. Luppard make—” Ashagri imitated the leopard's speedy exit from the picture in a series of stifflegged jumps.

“Then you didn't put him to sleep with both barrels when you fired the shotgun?”

“No,” the hunter explained regretfully. “He no slip. Gone. Very bad! Now no skin.”

Wounding a leopard with No. 7 shot and having a boy rush in is dangerous business and, leopard skin or no leopard skin, Ashagri was well clear of what might have turned out to be an embarrassing situation.

But a real and much more dangerous entanglement with a leopard occurred during breakfast the next morning. Bailey had taught his tentboy, Wulda Giorgis, to trap small rodents. Wulda had caught on so fast that he was graduating from the rat and mouse-catching class and occasionally brought in hyraxes—shikokos—and kabarros, or jackals. Wulda took pride in his trapping and the night before had set a number-four steel trap hoping to get a hyena. We were still enjoying Hussein's roast dik-dik and stewed prunes when Wulda re-



## Down the River Wabbi Shebeli

turned from his trap line to announce that some large animal had dragged off the number-four. Wulda and Looloo departed to trail the animal while we finished breakfast.

A few minutes later a shout—something in Amharic which we could not understand—came from a dense cluster of thornbush on the lower slopes of Abu el Kasim, just above camp. Instantly, the men were on their feet. Zebanias seized ancient guns and Cutting's and my boy thrust Springfields into our hands, excitedly crying:

“Nebur! Nebur!”—leopard! leopard!

We rushed up the hillside but the men had reached the brush ahead of us, scattered out and were searching. There was no chance to send them back. Bailey connected with Wulda who had seen the leopard dive into a thicket with the trap on a front paw. But the big spotted cat was lost for the time being in the gloomy depths of thornbush. The search continued for some fifteen minutes and we were all widely separated. Bailey and Wulda, heard a noise just ahead around a small bush. Bailey had warned Wulda repeatedly to stay back, behind him. But the tentboy, having seen the animal once and now hearing the noise, became over-eager and, disregarding the warning, rushed ahead.

A deep, throaty growl issued from the bush and at the same instant a mottled streak shot out and

## Savage Abyssinia

before the Abyssinian could put up an arm to protect his face, a paw, as Bailey put it—"quicker than any boxer's hand you ever saw," reached out and drove home for Wulda's head.

The spring was so sudden, so lightning-like, and they were so mixed up that Bailey dared not risk a shot; although no more than ten feet away. But he brought gun to shoulder and gave a wild yell instinctively—it startled the cat into letting go. The beast whirled, crouched, facing around and—Bailey shot. With one bound the leopard cleared a bush and was out of sight. Wulda Giorgis, face streaming with blood, saw Looloo rush up with Suydam Cutting's army sixshooter in hand. The tentboy was not frightened—just roused to fighting pitch. He seized the sixshooter from Looloo, paid not the slightest attention to Bailey's order to stay there—but plunged around the bush after the spotted cat. Blood and revenge were what he wanted at all hazards. Fortunately, when he came upon the leopard within a few feet the animal was stone dead. Bailey's bullet had entered the chest and passed through the heart. Under the circumstances a most lucky shot. Wulda's scalp was gashed to the bone. The strong, curved claws, sharp as needles, had cut to the skull in one raking sweep; three wide-open, gaping wounds from which the blood welled in gob-bets. But camp was near, disinfectants handy, and

## Down the River Wabbi Shebeli

in three days the tentboy was again doing his work.

But that affair taught us a lesson. Abyssinians are naturally unruly. They are excitable and have absolutely no judgment. The zebanias with their old black-powder guns that might shoot and might not, mule-loaders unarmed, my tentboy, F'yeesa, who simply would not stay back as I ordered him—were all doing their level best to rout out that dangerous beast. It was just luck that some one was not killed. So we made a new camp regulation. Thereafter no man would be allowed to accompany us after dangerous game unless he did exactly as told. And the zebanias were to remain in camp with their useless guns at all critical times.



## CHAPTER IX

KUDU, GERUNHUK, ZEBRA, ORYX

WITHIN three days the flood waters of the Wabbi had receded and the river was no deeper than to a man's chin. But the current was still strong. We could not well waste more time and decided to cross.

The problem of getting the mules over came first. Mules abhor deep water and we expected them to show rather set and determined ideas against entering the muddy river. But mules have one weakness; a blind worship, an unreasonable adoration for a white horse. Our one horse—a scrawny white pony—was, in the estimation of the mules, the loveliest creature beneath the sun. They would spend hours in camp taking turns currying with gentle teeth that worthless white beast. His presence kept the hard working pack animals contented. He was leader of the packtrain by unanimous consent and wherever he went the mules were sure to follow.

We drove the white pony into the water and forced him across by throwing stones behind and dragging on a lead rope ahead. When the snorting, terrorized mules saw their beloved equine angel swirling in the strong current, they brayed, ran up

## Savage Abyssinia

and down the bank—almost beside themselves with concern. The most devoted, determined to die with him, floundered in and the whole unmanageable herd followed, was swept off its feet but kept on and climbed the other bank, dripping, muddy and scared, but happy to be again on the side with the adored.

With two long poles lashed together and two strong men at each end the equipment was ferried across—about two hundred pounds to a load. The weight prevented the men from being swept away and by noon the entire outfit was safely upon the other bank. The non-swimmers clung to the poles and got over without accident. A man stationed on either bank kept up a fusilade of pistol shots into the water and no crocodiles interrupted the work.

We three white men tied clothes to the last load and plunged in. No crocs had been reported on nearby bars for some time and the last seen had been small. There was not much danger, but we swam as fast as we could for the opposite shore. We could not help thinking what a godsend one of us would be to a hungry croc drifting downstream along the muddy bottom, unseen and unsuspected; we had a feeling that white meat might be much preferable in the estimation of connoisseur “muggers,” and the fact that none had attacked the black





REEDBUCK



BAILEY AND A BLACK BUSHBUCK



AN UGLY WART HOG



## Kudu, Gerunhuk, Zebra, Oryx

men did not rouse in us any desire to disport ourselves longer than necessary in the water.

The men were jubilant. There had been much talk of turning back around their fires. We had no intention of retracing our steps and knew that eventually a way to cross would be found but they had been most dubious. The shouting and singing that arose showed their aversion to an ignominious return through a gameless, meatless country of heavy thornbush and rough trails. Three days along the south bank brought the caravan to the village of Sheikh Hussein, a Mohammedan stronghold. It is a holy place, everything in and around it belongs to the dead Sheikh, a Mohammedan chief who ruled the surrounding country long ago. His tomb, a conical structure of rock plastered with dried mud occupied a prominent position. Five other sheikhs high in Mohammedan circles in old times rest in white tombs in different parts of the village. The tombs are kept whitewashed and clean by the present inhabitants, but grass huts plastered with cowdung suffice for the living.

More than the usual numbers of crippled and diseased persons loitered along the village paths and came begging around the edges of camp. At the waterhole where the village folk obtain drinking water, wash clothes and water herds of goats and

## Savage Abyssinia

cattle we could understand the reason for the widespread disease. It was a filthy place.

At Sheikh Hussein in a school for mullahs, or priests, a low structure of loose stones with weeds growing between the interstices. Two old mullahs sat all day in the shade teaching a class of boys, mumbling interminably, passages from the Koran. They eyed us with stares of mingled hostility and aversion; clearly we were not of the anointed and our invasion was resented; an insult to the memory of the dead sheikh, perhaps. Women carried water from the goat-watering, cow-drinking, clothes-washing hole and the village men reclined on the dirt floors of tukuls or outside in the shade. Boys, herding a few goats and cattle on nearby hills were doing the only work beside water carrying. The inhabitants lived as their ancestors a thousand years ago. Sheikh Hussein gave the impression of a community long dead but whose members, strangely enough, were still living. The apathy, the lack of interest or curiosity, was distinctly noticeable even to us who had seen much of it. In Sheikh Hussein generations rise, grow old and are laid beneath a pile of stones on a small rise that drains into the water-hole but nothing ever changes.

The headman of the village, a mullah, ignored us completely. He neither visited camp nor sent a representative. We returned the compliment in

## Kudu, Gerunhuk, Zebra, Oryx

kind. The spirit of resentment so noticeable in the lowering glances of the inhabitants and their refusal to give any information on trails, water or game, was deep and uncalled for. The mullahs had evidently forbidden the people to give us information and the villagers appeared to be colossally ignorant. The only person we saw during two days at Sheikh Hussein who seemed to have intelligence was a lad of twelve whom we nicknamed "Gedemps"—kudu—because he came into camp at all hours of the day imploring us to follow him off into the bush after kudu. Bailey shot three lesser kudu bulls under the boy's guidance and that exhibition of ready marksmanship delighted the lad and placed us high in his estimation.

During the heat of the day if the sun went under a cloud Gedemps was sure to come and, by clever pantomime, give us to understand that while the sun was obscured the kudu would be out feeding:

"Gedemps," he would say, dropping down on hands and knees to imitate a kudu grazing—then point to the cloud obscuring the sun. In all that mullah-ridden, darkened community, "Gedemps" was the only living thing that showed a gleam of intelligence, or in fact, took us for anything but unbelievers foreordained to eternal damnation. And the boy was the only one in the village who would guide us to the next water. And when we left,

## Savage Abyssinia

trailing through the village, the inhabitants railed and cursed at the boy for showing the way. But he was an independent little Galla and, smiling back at us, marched ahead; he was our friend and cared not a whit who knew it. He deserved better things from life than existence in Sheikh Hussein—I hope the mullahs did not ill-use him when he returned.

During that uncomfortable two days a delegation of the caravan men came to the tent with Looloo to interpret. Ashagri was fluttering about the edges of the crowd much worried. It was an incipient mutiny and he had done his best to put it down but had failed.

“The men say they will not go further to the eastward,” Looloo announced. “The natives beyond are dangerous. We might all be speared. Ferengies are unknown and we are very far from Addis Ababa. They say you must turn south to Ginir, then west and north to Addis. They will not go further east.”

Ashagri threw up his hands and shook his head. He had done all he could. There is but one way to deal with Abyssinians when in such a frame of mind. Give them not one inch!

“All right,” we replied promptly, “you men can start back to Addis alone. We go on. If necessary we will send to Ginir for men to fill your places. Get your stuff together and turn your guns in to Ashagri.”



## Kudu, Gerunhuk, Zebra, Oryx

The mutiny died a quiet death at once. It was all a bluff, as such things usually are. The men, perfectly satisfied, had never entertained an idea of going home alone; but would have liked, if they could have bluffed us, to avoid the low, hot, unknown country to the east.

Piloted by the Galla boy we marched about two hours and camped at the foot of a mountain by a rocky watercourse, not running at that season, but with pools remaining in the more shaded rock basins. There was plenty of water for man and beast and the youthful guide was given a good meal and a dollar. A round, flat-topped mountain which rose across the creek-bed was said by the Mohammedans to have been thrown up in a single night by Sheikh Hussein—only one of the many miracles laid to the old sheikh and fully credited by the Mussulmans of the village. The pack mules were becoming tired and worn. Two more mules at least were needed before we could go much further. So we decided to remain there, where grass and water were good and to send Ashagri with three armed men south to the town of Ginir, fifty miles, to purchase two or three pack animals and a hundred pounds of salt for curing specimens; our supply was almost exhausted and the natives of Sheikh Hussein—by order of the mullahs,—refused to sell us anything.

An enforced wait of four or five days was not

## Savage Abyssinia

relished but there was no way to avoid it. The country around camp was covered with thornbush and the ground was cluttered with flat shale, loose and very noisy; hunting would be difficult. It was almost impossible to go quietly and we did not anticipate an interesting time at that camp. But the first afternoon a big bull kudu (greater kudu) came out upon the side of the holy mountain and stood looking down at camp. We wanted him badly and made a long hard stalk but the unavoidable noise of the loose rock breaking and crumbling underfoot made approach impossible. The next day he appeared again, silhouetted against the background of rock. Another determined attempt was made to collect that specimen—with the same disappointing result. Three times this happened and the Moham-medans in the party wisely shook heads:

“He is under the protection of the dead Sheikh,” they assured us, “and although you hunt for a month, you will never kill him.”

And by that time, after so many failures, the kudu had indeed taken on something of the nature of a spook.

The next morning during breakfast, my tentboy, F'yeesa Boolgoo, rushed up to the table, “Gedemps, gedemps!” He pointed to the mountainside opposite and there, showing almost white against the green background of thornbush was the “spook”

## Kudu, Gerunhuk, Zebra, Oryx

bull kudu. Through the glasses we could see his high twisting antlers as he stood gazing down upon the camp in his usual attitude; alert, watchful, but unafraid. This time he had brought a friend along to see the sights, another bull. It was not hard to imagine him explaining to his partner that the cluster of tents below was nothing to worry about, merely the camp of three clumsy and slow-moving white men whose approach could always be known far in advance by the rattle of loose rock on the mountainside; men who set themselves up to be hunters and museum collectors, but who couldn't move through thornbush with half the speed of a three-legged kudu.

Cutting and I decided to appeal to arms and make one more try for that specimen. Boolgoo followed along. The two bulls heard us forcing our way through the dense thornbush and clumping over the loose rock. They were gone as usual when we got near their lookout place. The boys in camp yelled up to us that they had moved into the densest brush on the mountainside, going at a trot and quartering a little upward. Cutting went back to camp disgusted and I was about in the same frame of mind, but looking above, saw that a few minutes more of climb would accomplish the flat summit and I thought they might work to the top.

Boolgoo and I reached the flat summit and cut

## Savage Abyssinia

across to the opposite side of the mountain, not more than a quarter of a mile. We approached the edge, the beginning of the steep descent, frequently, and looked down in the hope of seeing one or the other emerge from the brush. Upon one of these lookout excursions Boolgoo, who had gone a short way down the slope to get a better view, signaled that he saw something. Working his way back he explained by signs.

Arms raised high above his head meant horns. The excited gleam in his eyes meant something big. He pointed, whispering "gedemps," then touched his eye and shook his head, muttering "yellum, yellum," meaning that "gedemps," or the kudu, had not seen us.

"Malifiano," I whispered, "good."

The loose rock on the summit of Sheik Hussein's mountain was not as troublesome as it was lower down the slopes and we were able to advance with little noise. We took it very slowly, foot by foot, until arriving at a place we thought was directly over the kudu. Then we approached the edge, hoping to find him where he had been and feeding quietly. A standing shot is always highly desirable if it can be arranged.

Quietly as we had moved, however, Boolgoo bare-footed and I in soft moccasins, he had heard us. And when we looked down that aggravating "spook"



GREVY ZEBRA (wounded)



SKINNING THE MOUNTAIN ZEBRA





## Kudu, Gerunhuk, Zebra, Oryx

was on the run 175 yards away. The Springfield was already at full cock and the first shot—pure luck at that distance on a fast-moving target—curled him up. Over and over he rolled down the steep slope, piling up against a thorn tree thirty feet below.

He was dead when Boolgoo, who always went wild when anything was slain, got to him. But the business of halleleh, or puncturing the throat, did not weigh too heavily upon the conscience of the tentboy. Animals had to be stuck before he or any other Abyssinian would touch the meat; he was very firm about that. But unlike most of the others, he was quite willing to shade matters a bit and halleleh a dead one. Boolgoo's god was evidently a sportsman of broad and noble gauge who would not stoop to the practice of holding a stop-watch upon a fellow but winked jovially at the puncturing of an animal three or four minutes after its exit from this earthly sphere. He stuck the bull solemnly and we forgot to mention in camp that when stuck the kudu had been dead some minutes—so all the meat was saved and used by the men.

The view from the top of the holy mountain was superb. And I went up there again about sunset to watch the light fade over the vast thornbush plains.

Gleaming on a hilltop to the northwestward, the village of Sheikh Hussein stood, the six tombs of

## Savage Abyssinia

the sheikhs glistening like alabaster in the light of the dying sun. It was the hour of Moslem prayer and the mullahs, as I sat on a rock overlooking the plains below, began the evening chant. The wind was from the right direction, and the Mohammedan prayer floated up from below, dim, faint, barely audible, for the distance was four or five miles.

"Allah il Allah! Allah il Allah!"—interminably.

That Moslem chant with its repetition, its far-carrying tones, and its unvarying quality, seems to one unfamiliar with it the embodiment of fanaticism. Allah, who has heard it through so many generations must be bored to extinction. But then, there are almost as many kinds of gods as there are men, and perhaps the Moslem Allah hears it morning and evening, day after day, year after year, generation after generation, with satisfaction, keeping ready a special place for the singers, the men, while, as Mohammedans believe, he makes no such arrangements for the water-carrying, hard-working wives.

As the red sun descended behind the rugged peak of Abu el Kasim to the westward, the deep gash in the earth which is the bed of the Wabbi Shebeli, was filled to the brim with a burnished golden flood of color—molten gold. The vast thornbush plain that stretched west until abruptly terminated by the giant escarpment of the Arrusi plateau, swam in a sea of

## Kudu, Gerunhuk, Zebra, Oryx

deep shadows—mauve, lavender, purple—mysterious and silent.

Hamadryas baboons, a large herd, came down the mountainside opposite camp every afternoon to water. Barking and talking as they descended, we could hear them for a mile. But they were alert and hard to approach. The instant a member of that socialistic organization saw us, a short, sharp bark of warning was uttered. Instantly,—absolute silence. Even the chatter of babies clinging to their mothers' backs, ceased. All became silent as the grave through the thornbush forest. We had plenty of hamadryas for the collection but followed them upon two or three occasions to learn the tactics of that apparently well ordered little army. After the warning cry of danger, two or three old males climbed trees, sitting silently on a high branch. An enemy creeping through the brush would usually be seen long before he saw them. The lookouts gave cries of alarm and scurried down and the whole herd was off through the thornbush at such speed that it was useless to follow.

On the fifth day after his departure for mules and salt, Ashagri returned. Always dramatic, he made his entrance late at night under the guidance of a Galla spearman picked up on the trail. The man had passed our camp in the afternoon; Ashagri could not have found it in the dark. We were glad

## Savage Abyssinia

to see the little man and to hear that he had been successful, having bought two mules and a hundred pounds of salt. For we were anxious to leave that enforced camp of five days although we had added several kudu, lesser and greater species, a wealth of birds and small mammals to the collection. But we were eager to arrive in a country where oryx, zebra, gerunhuk and waterbuck could be found. The springs of Luku would be the next objective—three days to the eastward. And there, so local information had it, was much large game.

But twenty miles on the near side of Luku we camped one night at a waterhole where several Gallas were watering cattle. After their first suspicions had been laid to rest and our men had talked with them for an hour, they divulged the information that zebra and oryx were fairly plentiful in the open thorn forests of that immediate locality. This was cheering news and we determined to stay over at least one day and prospect the country. The dense thorn jungle that extended westward to the Arrusi plateau had thinned out here. There was not too much small brush and the trees were larger and more scattered; it was a typical open forest of flat-topped acacias; ideal hunting country.

There were many openings in the trees and through the forest, straight aisles, two, three and sometimes four hundred yards were common.

## Kudu, Gerunhuk, Zebra, Oryx

These vistas were usually narrow and the flat-topped thorn trees darkened the alleyways, throwing long, stringy shadows across. Zebra would be difficult to see; their black and white stripes would blend perfectly with the long vertical shadows. The natives assured us there were many zebra but did not distinguish between species. A "maydah hyah" to them was a zebra and as far as they knew all zebra were alike. We hoped to find there the Grevy, or mountain zebra, the largest and heaviest of the wild equine family. For the tracks around camp were as large as those of a big horse.

Zuleka and Birhano, one of the best packers, went with me the next morning—for zebra are large and a fresh and wet hide weighs much. The fourth member of my particular hunting crew that day was a Galla who claimed to know just where to go for both Sala and Maydah hyah—oryx and zebra. He assured us that he would be a great hunter if he had a gun and hinted that it might pay us to provide him with one for the time being. His request fell upon deaf ears, however, and he set out in the lead with nothing but his spear. Like a great many cattle-herding Gallas, he knew not the first principles of the business we were embarked upon. But he knew the country and could keep us from getting turned around in that level, open forest where there were no landmarks. For that reason I put up with him



## Savage Abyssinia

as with a necessary nuisance. Three times during the morning while I was stalking oryx, he stood up in plain sight from behind tree or bush where I had left him with orders to lie still. After the third offense, when three chances had been thrown away by his childishness, I had the boys order him in Galla to go back where he came from; to leave us at once. He was broken-hearted and hung his head like a little boy of ten promising never to do it again—and explaining that he had just wanted to see the gun fired. But he had made promises before and I insisted that he go. And we left him without further talk, standing there beneath a thorn tree, the picture of despair.

A half hour later I glanced down a long vista between the trees and there—about two hundred yards—saw something that appeared to have the outline of a zebra. I could distinguish no stripes, nothing but a vague shadowy apparition of no solidity, but somehow resembling a horse. I whispered to Birhano and pointed. Neither he nor Zuleka could be sure it was not just a suggestive arrangement of shadows. It did not move, but now I thought I could make out, indistinctly, the outline of a head and ears flaring and somewhat wider than those of a horse. I raised the Springfield, then took it down again. If the thing was a zebra, I thought, it should show up much more plain at that distance. Just then the



## Kudu, Gerunhuk, Zebra, Oryx

animal gave a start, wheeled and stood looking our way. It was plainly revealed—a big zebra. I shot quickly. It was a lucky shot for the bullet hit high near the middle of the back, severing the spine. He went down in a heap and we found him to be a very large stallion, heavily built for his height, which measured just sixty-two inches at the withers—fifteen and a half hands—the height of a big saddle horse—and he was of the Grevy species.

The pelt was in the best pelage and examining those glaring stripes it was hard to understand why he had been so difficult to distinguish. The black and white was in the loudest contrast. But the stripes were up and down and blended perfectly with the vertical shadows thrown by the trees and the long, streaked lights and shades of the thornbush, his background. It was a beautiful example of the law of protective coloring, the perfection of camouflage, infinitely more effective than any solid color could have been.

At the report of the rifle, the wild Galla, dismissed earlier in the day in disgrace, came running up. He had been following, dogging us, far behind in the brush. He would come in handy as a relief, carrying the heavy hide to camp, and we watched his imbecile antics and listened to his excited jabber with patience, for those of weak head are reported to be of strong back.

## Savage Abyssinia

But the wariest of all game shot at that camp was the oryx—*Oryx Gallarum*—a fine, big upstanding antelope measuring between fifty and fifty-four inches at the withers; heavily built for one of the antelope and carrying a pair of long thin horns, thirty inches and more, straight from the head like parallel rapiers—and as sharp. It might be thought that an animal of such size would be easily seen, but with the possible exception of the zebra, oryx were the most difficult of all to pick up in brush. His body is bluish-gray, or mauve, broken, however, by indistinct, deceptive markings several shades darker. The perfect pyramidal black patch on the face with black stripe across the nose breaks up the outline when viewed from the front.

There was a broad, waterless plain that began about two miles south of camp and extended we had no idea how far. The Gallas assured us there was no water in that direction—"for many days' march." There was much game out upon that plain, they said, but taking the packtrain through such a dry country was impossible. My introduction to *Oryx Gallarum* came upon the timbered edges of that vast plain. There was a low swale ahead, a gentle hill covered with long, waving grass. Three hundred yards away, along the top of the hill appeared a double rank of gun barrels, gleaming in the early morning sun. The likeness was startling



A GERUNHUK HEAD



THE LESSER KUDU IS A BEAUTIFUL ANIMAL



THE "SPOOK" BULL KUDU



## Kudu, Gerunhuk, Zebra, Oryx

and the ranks were apparently moving forward in steady, orderly precision—"the measured tread of the grenadiers"—and the shining musket barrels slanted backward at the correct marching angle. The rows of horns passed on behind the hill and I never saw them again, for the oryx had seen me and once out of sight had faded away like wraiths in the mist; not a living thing was visible from the hilltop. The scattered brush, here so thin that almost any other animal would have been revealed—had received them; their wonderfully effective coloring had done the rest.

Those gray swordsmen of the plains were hard to get. They were more alert and watchful than zebra and seldom failed to see us first. Then it was a case of a long, running shot or no chance at all. The first bull oryx that I killed was secured more through the eyesight and craft of a Galla native than any merit of my own. This native, for a change, turned out to be an excellent hunter. He wore a pair of rawhide sandals, Somali pattern, a brown cotton toga affair, and carried a long forked stick to push aside thorn branches. He picked up the ends of his toga, or shamma, as we entered the bush and wrapped it about his neck. He was then practically naked and went through the bush with an easy, swinging gait, noiseless and swift. He used his eyes every second, watching like a hawk, right, left and ahead. He was

## Savage Abyssinia

a natural born hunter ; a pleasant surprise after the other.

A small herd of oryx, about six or eight, saw us first as usual and bounded away. But the largest buli wasn't quite sure what he had seen, or perhaps, with his harem at hand, wanted to show off a bit—anyway he stopped to look back, shaking his rapier horns, a somewhat silly gesture of defiance. It was a long, chancy shot, about two hundred yards, but turned out to be lucky. The bull went to his knees, recovered—we found oryx very tough and hard to kill—and leaped away after the herd. The brush was thick and we lost sight of him after the first jump, but we knew he was hard hit. Five minutes' search revealed no blood marks on the ground, so I started on, hoping to come upon him four or five hundred yards ahead. But the Galla stayed to study out the tracks and before I had gone far called me back. There was a small spot of blood upon a thornbush. He picked up a leaf also that showed a drop or two of red. But those signs were of no benefit for I knew without such evidence, that he had been hit. Again I forged ahead and again the native refused to follow but stayed behind, bending low and working out the tracks like a hound. When I was almost out of hearing he set up a great shout—a wild hallooing. With infinite care he had followed the wounded animal's trail through a maze



## Kudu, Gerunhuk, Zebra, Oryx

of other oryx tracks, on dry dusty ground where prints three days old looked, to me, absolutely fresh. Not over two hundred yards the bull lay, in a thick clump of thorn, stone dead; the bullet had passed through the shoulder, touching the top of the heart.



## CHAPTER X

### INTO THE UNKNOWN COUNTRY

THE problem of water in that southern Galla country was of first importance. December and early January, when we passed through, was the middle of the dry season. The heavy rains that deluge the northern highlands in summer become nothing but light showers when they reach Gallaland and the lower country around the Wabbi. There is no trail along the banks of the river, for a multitude of canyons radiate from the main chasm of the Wabbi, running back from the river ten or fifteen miles; box canyons eight hundred to a thousand feet deep, one after another—impossible to cross. They must be circled, miles back from the water.

In summer, when some rain falls, the natives build crude dams in which is impounded enough water to last themselves and their stock for a few months. But the locations of these waterholes, in a rough, thornbush region are uncertain. Native guides must be procured. And the shy, distrustful Gallas of that southern land sometimes refused to accompany the caravan even one day's march. But

## Savage Abyssinia

Ashagri was a genial soul, bubbling over with good nature, and usually he managed, with a little tact and care, to inveigle some one of the wandering Gallas encountered, to lead us to the next hole of dirty, polluted, actually crawling water.

After a week in the zebra and oryx camp the tiny waterhole had been consumed by ourselves, our pack animals and the few cattle and goats driven down by natives. We had to move on—but not before the collections of zebra, oryx, gerunhuk and kudu were complete. Upon the disappearance of water the local natives would move their herds eastward to the Springs of Luku, deep seepages in the limestone rock that never go dry; the one dependable supply of water in a great area—the life of the country. From great distances half naked Gallas come with their herds three times a week—and the scene is as primitive as any mentioned in the Old Testament.

Watering thousands of cattle in three small springs, bailing water in gourds, dumping it into sun-baked mud troughs may well be looked upon as a crude and tedious method. Driving those same cattle fifteen or twenty miles through thornbush to get there—and home again afterward—would hardly be approved by civilized efficiency experts. Why not dig wells, set up windmills and let the breeze do it? But the wild Galla, leaning on his

## Into the Unknown Country

spear would gape at such a suggestion, puzzled. He would answer that his ancestors for a thousand years have done it his way. He could point to trails worn knee-deep in the lime rock from countless years of usage. And he would add, as he turned away to drive his herd to the home boma twenty miles through the bush.

“Why! The Ferengie must be crazy! Think of changing a practice that has been going on longer than we know anything about. Unheard of! Preposterous!” And so they go on and will continue in the same way for generations to come. Men stand waist-deep in the pools, filling and lifting big gourds which they pass to others above who dump them into the mud troughs high overhead on the ground level—for the water lies many feet lower. It takes a whole day to water a herd of size and the men bail furiously, chanting all the while in a minor key. Women and boys bring the cattle to the troughs in small bunches and when the watering is finished—back they start on the long drive home. Those who have far to go hold their herds in thorn bomas constructed along the trail and complete the journey on the morrow. The cattle are fine, fat and heavy; of the humped Galla breed.

The springs are surrounded by magnificent wild fig trees. Monkeys chatter aloft, leopard, kudu, a few zebra and some oryx come there to water at

## Savage Abyssinia

night, licking up the little left in the bottom of mud troughs, for they cannot get down to the main springs.

But the question of water did not become acute with us until we crossed the Wabbi again and headed north through country never before entered by white men. And that crossing of the Wabbi, although the river was low and fording easy, cost us two mules and our only horse; they were too weak to make the two thousand foot climb up the northern side of the canyon.

Turned and headed back to the river they were given a fighting chance for life. If fortunate enough to escape leopard and hyena the first night chances were bright that wandering Gallas would pick them up: It seemed better to give them this chance than to put a bullet through faithful and long suffering heads. The rest of the pack animals had been greatly weakened by the past few weeks on the rough trails and it was with some misgiving that we left the Wabbi and headed northward into the unknown country. But a Galla savage, from the south side, had agreed to pilot the caravan as far north as the main caravan route from Harrar to the Hawash. By our maps it would take nine or ten days' traveling to reach the main trail. If water could be found and provided the mules held out we would be all right. But without a guide who knew





STANLEY FIELD FALLS



WE NAMED THIS "THE DAVIES RIVER"



## Into the Unknown Country

the waterholes or who would be able at least to win the confidence of the wild Gallas, we should never have attempted the passage at that time of year. About half way to the main Harrar-Hawash caravan trail our maps showed a problematical stream, marked in dim dotted lines followed by a question mark: It was rumored to exist. Was it really there and if so would there be water during the dry season? Or, like many African rivers, should we find nothing but dry sand where during the rainy season ran a torrent? Our Galla guide assured us it was a good reliable stream. No, he had not been there. He had not been that far from home but had heard from other natives. He was the only one of the Gallas we interrogated who would accompany the expedition north of the Wabbi: The others, to a man, refused, saying: that some of their people had crossed at one time and had never been heard of since; the natives in that wild district, they said, were very bad; savages who did not hesitate to spear lone travelers and might even attack a strong caravan.

But our guide, when we left the Wabbi, was optimistic. He was also, he assured our boys, something of a dare-devil by nature; he couldn't help it. He had been born that way and things that left ordinary people shivering wrecks made not a ruffle upon the calm surface of his valor. We were very

## Savage Abyssinia

fortunate, it seemed, to have picked him up; such a bold, devil-of-a-fellow. And, striding along in his rawhide sandals, dirt-brown shamma flung gracefully over the left shoulder, spear in the right hand and necklet of charms in little skin bags swinging to and fro in the wind, he looked to be as excellent a savage as ever tucked up a breech clout to ford a stream. But alas! again our ideals were shattered, for within a few days he was to leave us in the lurch—in a serious predicament.

North of the Wabbi there were no trails, nothing but indistinct cattle tracks made by the herds of the nomadic Gallas who follow the water. I hardly know whether to call that region a broad, grassy plain with trees or a thin, open forest. It was almost level, broken by long, gentle swales. The grass was knee-deep to a mule and the trees were spaced about as far apart as in an orchard; and the acacias had much the look of apple trees from a distance. It was a beautiful country and one without underbrush; fine soil and no rocks. It was alive with oryx, those gray swordsmen of the plains with the rapier horns. Almost as tame as cattle, the herds moved off through the trees, deliberately and without haste, keeping about four hundred yards ahead. If we stopped they began feeding again. As long as we remained in plain sight they were not alarmed, but if one of us dismounted and crouched low in the

## Into the Unknown Country

grass this was a maneuver that startled them instantly and away they went switching short tails vigorously and galloping a half mile before stopping to look around. Cutting and I killed two for meat; we had all we wanted for specimens and didn't bother them after that.

Four days through that new country our Galla guided us faithfully. He was one of the few we had met in Abyssinia who dared go more than a day's march from his home. The shy natives we came upon in the new country faded like black shadows in the bush, leaving the course they happened to be following. They were wilder than the oryx. They had never seen a white man and it is doubtful if many had ever seen a caravan. Looking through my notes I find this entry made on the fourth day after leaving the Wabbi:

"Last night, an hour before sundown, I was hunting about two miles from camp. In glancing back I saw something duck behind a bush. It had been so quick that I could not see what it was. It seemed better in this new country, especially when alone, to investigate a thing of that sort rather than to have it behind. When I got to the brush the object had disappeared, but there in the dust were the fresh prints of Galla feet. There had been two Gallas. Such occurrences happen daily in this uncharted section. Never having seen a white man, they are



## Savage Abyssinia

curious. They mean no harm perhaps, but they do give you a creepy feeling, gliding along behind, much as if they were stalking you.

"After a short five-hour march to-day the indistinct trail we were following in a northwesterly direction suddenly dropped down 975 feet to a narrow but swiftly flowing river. Somewhere in this neighborhood our maps show a problematical stream in dotted lines with a question mark after the name 'Shanane.' A few Galla huts were scattered along its bank and green patches where they cultivate little dabs of kaffir corn could be seen from the top of the cliff."

It was the river about which we had been in doubt, a sizable stream for that dry country, as we could see from the top of the escarpment. But it was more than a stream of water, however. The whole valley was a mass of dark green foliage. Great wild fig trees spread wide drooping branches along the river banks. Tall, slender trunks of a species new to us, resembling elms, rose straight, marking the winding watercourse. It was a delightful scene after the bright, aching glare of tropical sunlight on volcanic rock and the blurring shimmer of heat waves rising from ground baked and blistered and cracked by the powerful, relentless sun: It was a little paradise set down in the midst of a burned out inferno.



## Into the Unknown Country

The mules smelled water and tumbled, helter-skelter, down that steep escarpment, raising clouds of dust, sliding in some places almost on tails. But that idyllic scene of peace and restful quietness of a sudden was broken by loud hallooing. There was much running back and forth. Naked children scurried for home like rabbits, dashing through the brush. Galla spearmen gathered in groups at a distance, conferring upon this strange phenomenon; the entrance of a caravan into their hidden valley. From the opposite hillside, across the stream, came far-carrying, strange cries answered by other savages from a great distance. It was a tocsin of alarm and the two or three caravan men who understood Galla told us that we were entering a dangerous place and that the natives were, in effect, gathering the clans. One group, skin-clad, stood upon the eminence a half mile from the big tree beneath which we had begun to pitch camp, and called down, threateningly, endlessly. There was menace in the tones and spears were waved aloft.

Not one of the inhabitants of that remote valley could be enticed into camp that evening, and our Galla guide, one of their own breed, went through the trees to talk with them. He returned with the information that we had been ordered to leave the valley at once. He was agitated and alarmed and we could see that he was no longer the dare-devil

## Savage Abyssinia

of a few days ago. And the next morning he had vanished—gone without his pay.

The guide's desertion put us in a serious position: We had every reason to believe that the country north—between the new river and the Hawash—was as waterless as the area we had just crossed. And we knew that an attempt to find our way through without a guide might easily mean loss of mules and baggage and perhaps a tough time for ourselves and the men. From the hostility of the natives there appeared to be little likelihood of securing another pilot. Two days went by and still no headway had been made in overcoming the suspicions of the inhabitants. Then we took matters into our own hands. Ashagri and Abtul were dispatched upon a kidnaping expedition.

We were still at breakfast when they returned from the bush dragging between them a young Galla about twenty-five years old. He acted like a trapped wild animal. His eyes rolled, he writhed and twisted in their grip and his face was a mask of terror. Straight to the table they dragged the victim, the caravan men following:

Ashagri's broken English explained: "W'en we cutch this Galla I say 'Now you be still!' I say we are of Ras Tafari, we do no harm. W'en I say 'Ras Tafari' he yell; 'No! No! Menelik! Menelik!' Then I am mad. We drag him in here."

## Into the Unknown Country

Looloo spoke Galla and we had him explain to the wild-eyed captive that we had been unable to secure a guide. That we *must* have a man to lead us to the next water and therefore had been compelled to resort to such rude methods. That we were not slave raiders—when this was translated it was easy to imagine from his terrified expression that the Galla equivalent of “that’s what they all say” was passing through his primitive mind. We assured him that he would be paid a dollar for guiding us to the next water and would then be freed.

But we had no intention of carrying our necessary but high-handed action too far. A battle with the natives would have been disastrous. The brush in the valley bottom was dense and those lean spear-men could have rushed us from close quarters in such numbers that, while a great many might have been killed, we should have been overwhelmed. Our plan was to pack up in a hurry and attempt to get out of the valley and upon the northern escarpment before the tribesmen became aware that we were taking one of their people along. We were confident that once in the open we could stand them off.

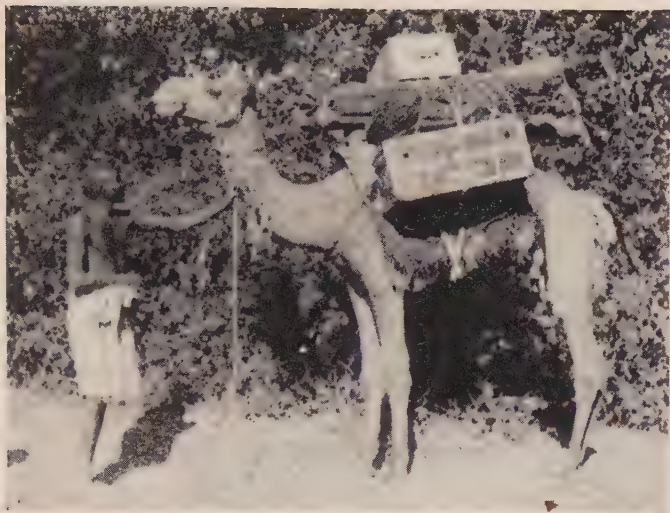
Mules were packed in a jiffy. The struggling guide was tied, arm and arm, to one of our strongest men and with another on his off-side we started. The valley was as quiet in the early morning as a peaceful New England park and we thought—and

## Savage Abyssinia

hoped, the kidnaping had been unnoticed. But we had been more closely watched than we knew. As we started, hallooing and the clarion Galla cries with rising inflexion on the last syllable echoed across the valley. We pushed on, urging the pack mules to their best pace, winding through the dense brush. Soon, little parties of spearmen came running toward the route of march. From all directions they came. We could see them dashing across openings in the bush and the hallooing and calling increased. The whole valley was roused. The clans were gathering.

It was a race. If we could urge the tired mules to greater speed and attain the northern open hillside we could retain the guide in spite of his tribe; they would not dare to attack in daylight in the open. The caravan mules were kept as close together as possible, but at best, hurrying through that thick brush following a winding cattle trail left us in a poor position for defense. It was a tense situation.

Our men had been instructed not to fire a gun whatever happened before we gave the order. And this would never be given except as a last resort in self-protection; the captive would be freed before matters came to that point, provided we could control the situation. But it was most delicate: We were afraid a savage would attempt to turn a pack mule aside into the brush, or, possibly, let drive with



A PACK CAMEL



SHE HAD NEVER SEEN A WHITE  
MAN BEFORE



A "BRAVE" GALLA WHO WENT  
NORTH OF THE WABBI





## Into the Unknown Country

a spear. If such a thing happened we might not have been able to control our hotheaded Abyssinians—and we three white men could not be everywhere in the long line at once.

Black shadows coursed swiftly through the undergrowth alongside the trail. Knots of spearmen concentrated upon knolls ahead and, behind in the trail, came the patter of many bare, black feet—and then, we rounded a bend and a big throng of warriors stood in the path, in the brush on both sides—and more were arriving every second. We were in for it. Written plain upon those dark faces was the resolution: “they shall not pass.”

A person's mind in situations of that sort works very fast. It seems to have time to consider not only the present dangerous situation in all its phases and angles, groping for a solution, but at the same instant to notice external things that have no bearing upon the case. I remember a feeling of distinct respect and admiration for those ignorant wild men: In their darkened way they were willing to risk their lives, to attack a strong caravan, to save one of their tribesmen from what they thought was to be a life of bondage. Ignorant almost as animals—they were loyal to a high degree and I admired them for it. But something had to be done and done quickly. Fortunately, Looloo was right at hand.

He was ordered to explain what we were doing

## Savage Abyssinia

and why we had been forced to do it—quickly and in few words. But such a riot of noise came from all sides, it was a moment before he could make himself heard. An ominous silence fell, Looloo's voice trailed on but the set, lowering expressions did not change and I knew the game was up; the captive must be set free instantly—before a battle could start. With a laugh—decidedly forced—I cut the ropes binding the captive to the arm of our strong man and that scared and shaken savage faded into the brush like a wraith. This action had a decidedly good effect. It might not be too late to restore confidence. An old man standing directly in front looked more intelligent than the average. Calling Imar, Cutting's syce, I handed him a Maria Theresa dollar and made signs for him to confer it upon the ancient. Looloo was told to explain to him that—as an evidence of our good faith—we were paying him in advance to guide us to the next water; that every one knew slave raiders had no use for old and decrepit men and our willingness to take him instead of the young man was proof that we were not after slaves. The old fellow considered, turning the dollar over and over in his hand. It was vast wealth to him and Looloo added that he would be given a dollar for each day he stayed with us.

But the rest set up a howl of warning. They tried to prevail upon him not to go. We could understand

## Into the Unknown Country

clearly their meaning if not the words. We smiled genially, confidently. He thawed out and finally, raising his hand for silence, made a long harangue.

"He come," Imar whispered, and my tentboy and gunbearer, F'yeesa, standing close against my mule, muttered something to the same effect in a tone of great relief. It was all over. The ancient, evidently a man of influence, ordered the warriors to return to their tukuls and down the winding cattle trail he set out, the whole caravan following.

We decided to mark that beautiful stream on our maps with the name Davies river, in honor of D. C. Davies, director of the Field Museum, who has launched so many successful expeditions into far places. Our guide informed us that the natives call the river "Shinane," and with the usual indefiniteness of savages, said it flowed "away off" and waved a brown arm and snapped his fingers to denote distance. In all probability it flows into the Wabbi far to the eastward. In the rains it is a raging torrent. But there is good water and plenty of it in the Davies river at all seasons—which is a good thing for future travelers in that dry country to remember. It was five days' trek from the Wabbi and the journey to the Hawash could be made in five more from the new river. But there are no regular trails between and water only in isolated seepage holes that cannot be found without the aid of nomad Gallas. If the

## Savage Abyssinia

natives refuse to act as guides—and they are liable to—it would be fatal to any caravan attempting the trip. Mules could never make it. Camels could do without water easily enough but the lava rocks would, perhaps, prove too sharp for their soft feet.

Our savage guide was a quaint study. The things that we expected to interest him; cameras, picture books, my portable typewriter, caused not a passing flicker of curiosity. He may have thought the clicking of the typewriter was white man's music. He was not interested. Folding tables and camp chairs, the double green tents, chop boxes, all failed to intrigue his imagination. But one of Bailey's small traps for rodents gave him a thrill of delight. Here was something he could understand. But he registered most astonishment at our table forks when shown their use. And when the cook opened a tin of fruit he begged so hard for the empty can that Hussein was told to give it to him—Hussein kept all empty cans to trade to villagers for chickens; one can, one chicken. A piece of tinfoil, the wrapping of a film, amused him and all one afternoon he sat in the shade, smoothing it down and crinkling it up. He returned the third morning to his home, hands filled with empty cans, tinfoil, used shotgun shells and other trinkets with which to astound the people of his village. But he also carried, tucked away in the folds of his dirty shamma, the two Maria

## Into the Unknown Country

Theresa dollars in hand paid for valuable services rendered.

A rough country strewn with lava rock lay between Davies river and the main Harrar-Hawash caravan trail. The Chercher mountains had to be crossed but the people were, if not friendly, at least neutral. It took nine days to cross the unknown country between the Wabbi and the main caravan trail to Hawash and in all cost the lives of five mules and our one horse. The last three days we packed our saddle mules—the cook's and Ashagri's had been packed several days earlier—and arrived at the village of Bidessa on foot, but with every specimen safe and outfit intact.

The town of Hawash on the railroad lay but a few days further along the main caravan route. Well used and known trails are always uninteresting and this was no exception. But at Hawash we heard reports of much game two or three days' march to the westward; hartebeest, waterbuck, kudu, oryx and gazelle. There were also rumors of a series of beautiful waterfalls in that direction, cliffs over which the Hawash river rolled in wild and spectacular flood. Our maps showed nothing of the kind so we decided to investigate. The altitude around Hawash is comparatively low, about four thousand feet; a flat, open plains country, one that might almost be called a desert. It was no place for mules



## Savage Abyssinia

and our pack animals had reached the limit of endurance; they could go no further under load without many days of rest.

Somali camel drivers were hired, thin, long-legged, silent brown men with their growling, roaring, discontented beasts. Selecting from our outfit all that would be needed on a week or ten days' trip, we stored the specimens and other baggage at the station—it would be shipped to Addis on train with us upon our return—and started the mules with nothing but empty pack saddles, in charge of Agaboru and half the men, to Addis Ababa, while we prepared to set out westward over the desert with the camels.

The reports of game and rumors of the falls turned out to be correct.

The upper fall is almost one hundred feet high. The Hawash, the second largest river in Abyssinia, pours over the edge in a tumultuous roar; the sound can be heard for a great distance and spray, rainbow-tinted, floats away like gossamer on the wind. The river rushes on below through a deep canyon, sheer-sided and gloomy, wild and impassable. There are many game trails winding through the thorn-bush and leading to the water above the falls. Almost any hour of the day kudu, waterbuck, hartebeest or herds of gazelle carefully and cautiously approach through the bush. The river is the one



## Into the Unknown Country

watering place of the wild animals of the surrounding country. Hippos snort and flounder through the quiet water above the falls and the river banks are beaten flat where the huge animals pass back and forth from still pools to the open forest alongshore. Crocodiles bask on mud bars or lie concealed beside game trails waiting for a victim. The place is not unlike a zoo or an open air natural history museum with the diversity of its animal and bird life. And so we named the falls of the Hawash for Stanley Field, president of the Field Museum.

Here waterbuck, hartebeest and gazelle were added to the collection.

It was hard to leave that camp at the falls of the Hawash and set out with the camel train for the railroad and Addis Ababa. The falls themselves are beautiful. And the wide valley of the Hawash with its big trees, wild fig, acacia and many others, its high grass, crisscrossed with game trails; the bushpig, kudu and bushbuck feeding in the quiet meadows in the evening and early morning and the occasional bands of gazelle coming in from the plains to water, were fascinating. And we could not understand why such a country should remain without inhabitants.

Ten days later, however, at the town of Metahari, we learned why there are no villages in that favored valley; it is the dividing line—or deadline—between

## Savage Abyssinia

the Abyssinians and Gallas on the one side and the dreaded Dankali savages on the other, a sort of no-man's land. A few hours before we arrived at Metahari, Dankalis had raided the town and carried off thirty Galla women and many camels. The little cluster of tukuls was buzzing with excitement. All cattle, camels and goats for miles around had been driven in for protection. The plain was dotted with closely guarded herds. But the raid was over. Women and camels had been carried back to Dankaliland and the Galla villagers were counting up their losses. One with whom we talked didn't seem so much put out at the loss of the thirty women—but he was terribly upset about the camels.

January thirteenth, upon arrival in Addis, we found that Osgood and Fuertes had returned the day before from their trip to the Jumm-Jumm forest in the province of Sidamo. It had been almost two months since we had parted upon the slopes of Mount Albasso. In that time we had had no word from them or they from us. Such close connections were surprising and fortunate. They had passed through Sidamo, Kambata and Guragwe making a fine collection of birds and small mammals. More than two thousand specimens were taken by both parties on the first, the southern journey. It was better than we had hoped for.

Ras Tafari sent for us the next day: He was

ALLAMAYU WITH  
KUDU



TWO FINE ORYX HEADS



SPOTTED HYENA



## Into the Unknown Country

very cordial and his little brown dog romping from one to the other with wagging tail brought from the Regent, the remark:

"You are old friends, you see, and now," he went on in French, "what luck did you have?"

Cutting's fluent French made the presence of an interpreter unnecessary and we had a most pleasant afternoon. We were able to give information on conditions in remote districts that he was very glad to get and, fortunately, we had met certain chiefs in the south, recently appointed, of whom he inquired; they were new in their positions and he was not entirely sure of their fitness. The Ras assured us, when we left, we should have passports for our long trip to the northern country within a few days.

Osgood's and Fuertes' notes give an interesting account of their reception by Dejasmach Balcha, ruler of the big province of Sidamo. Balcha rules the broad valleys and rough mountains of his principality like a powerful baron of England under William the Conqueror ruled the moors and fens of his feudal holding. His warriors are reported to be numerous "as the leaves of the trees."

When Menelik conquered the Gallas—so the story goes—he found Balcha, then a youth, lying on the battle field, wounded and mutilated in the customary manner. Menelik then did one of the—for that time and place—strange things for which he was noted;

## Savage Abyssinia

he had the Galla youth picked up and nursed back to health. Later he took the lad into his home, raised him and years afterward put him in charge of the finances of Abyssinia. At the battle of Addua, Balcha, although not expected to be a fighter in his position as finance minister, conducted himself so gallantly that he was made governor of a province, which situation he has held ever since. He is a strong man with absolute, unquestionable power over his domain. Reactionary, anti-foreign, he has the Abyssinian prejudice against outsiders fully developed and there was some question about Balcha's friendship or even willingness to meet white men. Knowing his power, Osgood sent the interpreter ahead to announce their arrival, and it was with feelings of relief they learned the Dejasmatch would see them the next day. But interviewing Balcha was a ticklish matter. Should he take a notion against having two white men travel through his country—back they would go under escort of several thousand warriors.

The village of Agara Salaam, which means "peace to this country" is the seat of Dejasmatch Balcha. He selected the location a few years ago, gave orders for the construction of a village and the thing was done by his retainers almost overnight.

Osgood and Fuertes, as they rode down the principal "street" were surprised at the respect



## Into the Unknown Country

shown them by a throng engaged in one of the favorite outdoor pastimes of the country; an open-air, impromptu court. The vociferous wranglers stopped in the midst of their heated argument, rose and bowed as the white men passed. Word had gone 'round that Balcha was to receive the two Ferengies that day in audience and whoever the Master condescended to see must be shown the proper respect.

The "gibbi," or residence of the governor, stood upon the crest of a hill in the center of the village, surrounded by a stockade of hewn cedar logs twenty feet high. "That cedar palisade," to quote Fuertes, "must be a mile around, and together with the inner wall, constitutes a strong defensive work against the crude weapons of the country."

"We were met at the entrance," Osgood's notes explain, "by two fine-looking attendants, dressed in the whitest of shammas, and escorted to the inner gate. There the chief chamberlain and a delegation took charge of us. The chamberlain, a big magnificent Abyssinian type, escorted us to the round reception hall. In front of it was a low hanging, white cotton flap lifted partially for us to enter and we found ourselves in a spacious round room some sixty feet in diameter. On the left, in rather dim light, sat the Dejasmatch on a dais from which oriental rugs extended in front.

## Savage Abyssinia

"The old fellow rose and bowed but with features as impassive as I have ever seen. He had slightly gray hair, a smooth shaven and not very masculine face, but one that showed great determination and perhaps craftiness. Behind us, in the center of the room stood the chief chamberlain, stiff as a ramrod. On either side of him forming a sort of crescent were about twenty other attendants."

The oriental, barbarous setting—the high conical-roofed reception hall, the strong palisade without, the stiff court attendants and the hundred or more retainers, some with spears, some with guns, about the doors created the proper atmosphere for this old potentate. And as the two visitors took the coldly extended hand and noted that expressionless, "poker face," they were not at all sure that the expected trip into Sidamo would not have to be given up. They waited for him to speak but Dejasmach Balcha is not in the habit of volunteering anything. He remained standing dignified and coldly silent. During that period of chill silence they noticed that directly behind Balcha, lying on a seat within easy reach of his hand were two rifles of heavy caliber. A sprinkling of swords, also within easy reach, reposed on the other side. Cartridge belts hung in a handy place. Fuertes says:

"We made the customary greetings which he

## Into the Unknown Country

answered in monosyllables without a change of expression. We told him what sort of game we were after and that we had everything we needed but his permission to travel in Sidamo. He answered 'ow'—yes, and 'ishi'—all right, or I will see to it. We were about to say good-by when he asked us to sit down. Chairs were brought and for five minutes we talked commonplaces through our interpreter, Balcha answering 'ow'—yes and 'yellum'—no. At the termination of the interview he had not once so much as given a sign that he more than subconsciously heard what we said. But we felt we had done the right thing in calling although it had seemed to net us so little. What might have happened had we neglected to pay our respects!"

Dejasmach Balcha, although distrustful of Ferengies, and all their works, is of the old hospitable school, and that afternoon a long line of slaves filed into camp bringing chickens, sheep, honey, tej and native beer and a fine fat bullock. There was hay for the mules, grain for the men and even firewood ready cut into convenient lengths; a regal gift and one that could not be refused or paid for under any circumstances. Such a potentate must not be insulted by the offer of payment. The slaves were relieved of their loads. The fat bullock was tied to a

## Savage Abyssinia

stake and the thirty or forty slaves and servants filed out of camp with empty hands. Dejasmatch Balcha, although he does not approve of outsiders, believes in hospitality as one of the primary virtues.

## CHAPTER XI

### TREKKING TO THE NORTHERN HIGHLANDS

**P**REPARATIONS for the long northern trip were begun at once. About twenty-five new pack mules to replace those worn out upon the southern journey had to be bought. A few men were let go and replaced. New passes for the trail must be obtained from Ras Tafari. The specimens secured were packed in tin-lined boxes and shipped direct to the Field Museum. And, at the end of three weeks, when all was in readiness, it was with great expectations that we set out. The trek would be longer and more difficult than the first, the country to be crossed would be higher, rougher and entirely different. And, upon the stupendous heights of Simien would be found the Walia ibex, that sturdy mountain animal found nowhere in the world but upon the dizzy peaks of that remote region.

The inhabitants in the north would be pure Abyssinians—quite different from the Galla savages of the southern deserts. Powerful chiefs would have to be met and entertained. If they should prove reasonable, as we hoped, difficulties of travel would, through their assistance, be greatly ameliorated. If,

## Savage Abyssinia

on the other hand, they should refuse permission to hunt or even to travel in their domains, the trip would be a failure; Ras Kassa of Shoa, Ras Hailu of Gojjam, Ras Guksah of Amhara, the Dejasmach Ayalu, baron of Simien and the Dejasmach Gabra Sallassy of Tigre, with their warriors might bar the path; any one of them, if unfavorable, could wreck our expedition with a single wave of the hand.

Getting the men out of Addis was the same difficult job it had been upon the first trip. Arguments arose over tent poles, cooking pots, water bottles and the place was like a madhouse the whole morning. We got off at three in the afternoon. The fact that we got off at all that day was something in the nature of a triumph but was not accomplished before Allamayu, Bailey's syce, Zuleka, my property, and a vociferous sea-lawyer of a packer from Osgood's brigade had been discharged. They were singled out as leaders of the wrangling group and cast into the outer darkness. This quieted things, the mules were loaded and as we filed out of town the three cast-offs refused to stay fired, but joined the caravan as if nothing had happened, keeping well to the rear, however, far from us and near Ashagri's protecting and good-natured arm. We let them stay.

Looloo, the smart and unreliable interpreter of the southern trip had been replaced by a callow, pinfeather youth of about twenty summers. This pre-





A SWINGING BRIDGE



GARASMATCH SALLASSY



LETTER CARRIERS



## Trekking to Northern Highlands

cocious lad had been taught English, after a fashion, in one of the foreign missions—a typical missionary boy. During the first three days he found many things that did not suit; none of the others would take him in his little cotton tent. His saddle mule was no good—for some reason all interpreters must ride. A great many things in this rough world needed rearranging, it seemed, to make it a suitable place for George—the name they had given him at the mission—to live in. In our weak and impotent way we shuffled things up a bit for him; made room in one of the men's tents and shielded him from the rude jests of rough and ready hearties who just would sing songs with extemporaneous words, in which George's name occupied a prominent if not complimentary place.

On the third morning, when too far from Addis to be replaced, George announced that he had made a serious mistake when he signed up for thirty-five Abyssinian dollars a month: He was easily worth fifty, he said, and in order that so great an error should not long remain uncorrected, insisted that we raise him to fifty on the spot. But this was not all. George was a boy of infinite resource. He had sold us a pack mule for forty dollars and now imparted the information that, while he had seemingly been satisfied with forty at the time and had taken a receipt for it—he had since decided that the mule's

## Savage Abyssinia

price was sixty dollars; we could square things and retrieve our standing with him by paying the difference. It was more than human nature could bear, and George was told that his connection with the expedition was there and then severed and he would oblige by hitting the trail for home.

"Then," spoke the optimist, "I must have a mule to ride back and twenty dollars."

It was then that we told George some things that are not in the bright lexicon of youth as taught at the missions. But he understood, rare to his ears as the words may have been, for he informed us dramatically that he was not a slave and such language was applicable to none other—and he would bring charges against us upon arrival in Addis. Poor George. The last we saw of him was his natty little white man's hat bobbing as he walked down the trail, his swagger stick—affected by many so-called educated boys—clipping the grass at his side. We could not hear what he called back—doubtless something rude—for the real Abyssinians, he-men who pretend to be nothing else, were guffawing so loudly that the words were lost. George's life will be hard with his white man's shoes, cane and hat and his smattering of education; in his opinion far too good for his own country and in ours not good enough for any—a misfit.

The canyon of the Muger river was the first

## Trekking to Northern Highlands

natural barrier in the line of march; deeper and more rugged than anything passed in the southern country. It is a spectacle of rough grandeur on a magnificent scale. From rim to rim the distance approximates ten miles and the depth is four thousand feet by the aneroid. The air is cool and bracing on the plateau but a thousand feet lower becomes noticeably warm. At the bottom it is tropical. The night we spent there was uncomfortable and hot. The difference in temperature in a few hundred feet in the tropics was one of the greatest surprises of the trip.

The Muger valley is about forty-five hundred feet above sea level where we crossed. The plateau on both sides slightly over eight. There is as much difference in temperature between those elevations as there is between July and October in America. And the smoky, hazy atmosphere on the plateau was typical of Indian Summer days at home. The canyon was filled with that dreamy blue haze so reminiscent of Illinois when the corn is in the shock and the fodder in the fold. Groves of wild olive trees on faraway hills appeared distorted, half buried in smoke, and low clouds clinging to the horizon presented a weird, unearthly appearance. It was hard to believe that a northern winter, with its gales of sleet and snow was not lurking in the offing—just over the horizon.

## Savage Abyssinia

The beautiful province of Shoa, crossed in six days, has that wide, endless appearance of the plains of Saskatchewan. The pack train wound slowly ahead along the curving grassy trail, up a gentle swale, across wide and level stretches, then down an easy slope that reached onward for miles, and the same day after day.

Grass-roofed native tukuls scattered over the scene, usually in groups of three or four, were surrounded by thorn bomas. Herds of humped cattle and fat-tailed sheep dotted the landscape, for Shoa is one of the richest of Abyssinian provinces. At this season the grass had been burned by the sun to a tawny yellow. Valleys, watercourses and bits of plain unaccountably created the impression that we had seen them before; it was their likeness to Canadian prairies, to the plains of Kansas or the short, buffalo-grass country of the Black Hills region. And as we approached the canyon of the Blue Nile, vistas opened, giving views of rolling hills crowned with groves of wild olives. And the dark green of these contrasted with the yellow sun-burned grass presented a picture that was more than a reminder of Californian pastures; it was a positive duplicate.

The Blue Nile for all practical purposes may be said to rise in Lake Tsana, but it really rises south of the lake, flows north into it, across a wide bay—



## Trekking to Northern Highlands

where its course may be followed by the sky blue of the river water—and out the lower end of Tsana. It then swings toward the southeast in a great bend a hundred miles in diameter, turns west and so on to the Sudan where it joins the White Nile near Khartoum. The canyon of the Blue Nile is the most stupendous river chasm in all Abyssinia. From its southern rim the grandeur and magnitude of that Titanic gash across the face of the world stood revealed in a single instant. The canyon could not be seen until we stood literally on the rim. The earth disappeared before us—fell away at our feet and far down, almost lost in the haze, ranges of hills, scattered forests, tiny watercourses, cliffs, jutting spurs of rocks, buttresses, giant rock chimneys were dimly visible far below.

To the east and west for fifty or seventy-five miles the great canyon could be seen, winding and twisting, filled with bluish-gray haze: It was a picture—a canvas, depicting in its lights and shades, its far-off, dreamy colors, its idyllic vistas and resplendent panoramas, a land that never was or never will be. And straight across, almost at the limit of vision, loomed the rough and craggy heights of Gojjam, the seat and stamping ground of that Old-Man-of-the-Mountains, Ras Hailu.

It is a three day trek to descend into the six thousand foot canyon, ford the river and ascend the

## Savage Abyssinia

opposite slope The trail is a mule-killer: The sudden drop, the heat in the bottom, and the exhausting pull up the other side is about all a pack mule can stand. But there is no other way. And a traveler must keep his better nature well under control and remember that there will still be mules in Abyssinia when he is dead and gone. Shutting his eyes to the spectacle of laboring, exhausted animals, he must push through, regardless. It cannot be done by easy stages; there is no grass or feed of any kind in the canyon and this crossing, where packtrains necessarily straggle, has the reputation of being one of the worst places in the country for shiftas.

Native caravans have a way of waiting for company before they begin the descent; it is considered more healthy to pass through with a large number of men than to risk it with a small company. Three or four native outfits encamped on the rim were glad to see us and followed along, close behind. The protection, moral and otherwise, of a Ferengie caravan is perhaps more acceptable to native travelers here than anywhere in Abyssinia: They know that shiftas are fully aware that if anything should happen to a Ferengie packtrain, either Ras Kassa or Ras Hailu—or both—would turn out enough fighting men to comb the canyon for a hundred miles in each direction, round them up and put on a wholesale hanging and butchering bee.

## Trekking to Northern Highlands

Down, down, down, the trail into the canyon winds and twists like the loose coils of a lariat, ever descending, generally at an angle of 45 to 50 degrees. Four hours—a full day's work for heavily loaded mules on this trail—and you camp near a small spring; halfway to the bottom.

The next morning you take up the business of descending where you left off. In about three hours, after negotiating rock ledges of uncomfortable steepness, winding through great drifts of boulders, lava rock and round loose stones, you come out upon the bank of the Blue Nile.

Fortunately, it was the season of low water and the river was only about breast deep. The ford is good, current not too strong for the mules and every animal made the crossing in safety. In the rainy season the Blue Nile is impassable, and, in fact, for months thereafter.

Across the river the trail begins the heart-breaking ascent of the northern escarpment. By marching six hours steadily the caravan reached a spring, halfway up. There we made camp, mules exhausted, men tired—the first time our men had admitted feeling the least bit done up. And still three or four hours' hard climbing lay between us and the top; the plateau of Gojjam.

As the packtrain filed up to the spring a sentry, stationed on a jutting point of rock near the trail

## Savage Abyssinia

saw us and immediately blew several blasts on a small, curved brass horn slung around his neck by a rawhide cord. The notes were thin and clear and piercing; they echoed back and forth between the walls of the canyon with an eerie quality—"the horns of Elfland faintly blowing."

He came down the trail and we saw that he was dressed in the zebania, or soldier's jacket, and carried a spear in one hand and an old gun slung over his shoulder by a strap. He was a fine, upstanding figure of an Abyssinian. He bowed very low:

"Salaam."

A zebania sent by Ras Hailu to meet and guide us to his master's temporary quarters at the village of Bichana. The blasts upon his horn had been a signal to start a messenger, waiting upon the top of the escarpment, posthaste to Ras Hailu with news of our arrival in his province.

Another broad view of the canyon lay unrolled from that halfway camp; a superb spectacle, wild, unexplored for hundreds of miles, rugged, sublime. The high plateau through which the river has cut its channel as with a sharp instrument enjoys perpetual fall weather, while along the banks of the river, palm trees flourish, tropical plants grow in riotous confusion—a jungle of thorn and strange green foliage—and the heat is intense.

For several hundred feet above the river the can-



NEAR THE HEADWATERS OF THE BLUE NILE



ABYSSINIAN TYPES





## Trekking to Northern Highlands

yon sides rose straight, sheer. From there, a sloping terrace, perhaps a quarter of a mile in width, covered with thick thornbush, reaches to the next sheer wall. From the summit of this the ground slopes again in a steep terrace—then another vertical precipice: The canyon is a series of sloping terraces and sheer walls. At bends in the stream immense buttresses of rock are thrust forth; towers; isolated mountains of lava that rise straight to the level of the escarpment. Around these the Nile swings with a roar and a rush, tumbling in long stretches of white water over great boulders broken off and fallen to the river bed from the heights above.

The next day was Friday. We could always tell when Friday came, for Ali, Osgood's Somali tent-boy, did a vast amount of praying on Friday—storing up treasure where moth and rust doth not corrupt nor thieves break through and steal. Not that Ali omitted his devotions on other days: Every morning before camp was struck he was out in front of his little cotton tent, prayer rug spread, hands and feet carefully washed, kneeling, then standing to face Mecca. There was much formality about Ali's prayers; he undid his turban and rewrapped it three times during the course of the ceremony. Much seemed to depend upon the way the turban was done up. But Ali was sincere—which, after all, I suppose, is the main thing. And he was not a

## Savage Abyssinia

bit bashful about being seen in action—which was more than could be said for some of the other Mohammedans in the caravan.

The old cook, Jebril, was a Mussulman, too, but he didn't take his religion seriously. Ali told me once, confidentially, that Jebril occasionally took a small drink of tej. That was very bad, Ali said.

"I tell Jebril," he went on, deeply worried, speaking in his very broken English picked up in British Somaliland, "I tell Jebril that he don' pray enough. I tell him he gettin' 'long to be a ol' man. Pretty soon he die, maybe. 'Jebril,' I say, 'w'y don' you get busy an' pray some more? W'y don' you quit this tej business? If I am ol', like you, you bet I pray, pray, pray. Me, I pray more as you, right now—an' I not ol' like you neither.' But Jebril, he don' listen. I bet Jebril he sorry w'en he get sick—you see." And late that Friday afternoon the Mohammedan element was gathered before the cook's tent, ten or twelve, under Ali's guidance, chanting away in chorus while old Jebril, the backslider, like Achilles, sulked in his tent. Judging from the rakish angle of his turban, the old man had been sampling the local tej again and Ali had called the gathering to wrestle with the demon: Ali was a conscientious boy and couldn't bear to see a brother Mohammedan "hair hung and breeze shaken" so near the brink of utter destruction—"and him," as

## Trekking to Northern Highlands

Ali said, "gettin' 'long to be an ol' man." But they didn't have much luck in the way of plucking that brand from the burning; Jebril persisted in his heinous ways until the end of the trek, happy and contented.

Over the rolling plains of Gojjam our progress took on the nature of a triumphal procession; word had gone out from Ras Hailu's headquarters. Villages had been ordered to receive us as great chiefs are received. Half a dozen times a day, local Shums, village chiefs, with their retinues of ten or twenty spear or riflemen rode to meet the caravan. Exchanges of courtesies followed: Deep salaams and neatly worded speeches of welcome. A chief would usually ride with us until the arrival of the next Shum when he would bow and, followed by his retainers, set off across the hills for home; a most pleasant change from the suspicious and hostile attitude of the wild Gallas of the southern deserts.

Gojjam is a populous province and many villages crowned the tops of hills. There was not an evening on that long march when slaves, escorted by some village dignitary, did not bring gifts of food, firewood, cut grass and barley beer to camp. As regular as clockwork Osgood's interpreter would come with the information that gifts had arrived. Upon those ceremonial occasions they must be in-

## Savage Abyssinia

spected, received formally and the leader thanked. We made one determined attempt to refuse a fat bullock and after that gave up the idea of refusal as impracticable.

Upon that occasion the interpreter was told to return the ox on the plea that we were overburdened with meat and couldn't possibly use more. The animal was driven back to the village and we thought we had refused that gift diplomatically. But the next morning, bright and early, a dignified chief strode in with his escort and, marching in the center of the armed crowd, was a poor and woe-begone villager—the owner of the steer refused. The chief was indignant:

"I must apologize for this worthless man," he stated, pointing his staff at the sad-faced prisoner, "he shall be punished. He was ordered to furnish a fat bullock. Your refusal of the gift is proof that it was not good enough. He shall bring you another, larger and fatter." The chief wanted it clearly understood that such skimping of presents was none of his doing. It took a half hour and the best efforts of the interpreter, Dabba, a clever boy too, to explain why we had refused the gift and to assure the chief that the animal had been everything the heart could wish in the way of size and fatty tissue.

While all this palaver was going on, over the hill on the run came a letter-carrier on foot, an envelope

## Trekking to Northern Highlands

held before him in split stick. It was from Ras Hailu:

“Honorable Dr. Osgood and party:

“Peace be to you. I am well by act of God. I am sending the bearer, Allaminny Bogalla, to bring you on your way.

“Ras Hailu.”





## CHAPTER XII

### RAS HAILU

**R**AS HAILU is perhaps the most powerful chief in Abyssinia after Ras Tafari. He is certainly the most picturesque and interesting. Like an Old-Man-of-the-Mountains he resides in his stronghold at Debra Markos among the high peaks of his vast domain; monarch of all he surveys. His father before him ruled Gojjam and Ras Hailu, born to the purple, is the typical highland chieftain, brooking no restraint, no interference.

Gojjam is a wide and rich holding with its immense herds of cattle, sheep, horses and mules, its populous villages crowning the hilltops; its churches, hordes of priests, and an estimated population of two millions not counting slaves. From the Sudan border on the west to the big bend of the Blue Nile, from Lake Tsana south to Shoa this great country belongs, bag and baggage, to Ras Hailu. The first principle, the Golden Rule of its inhabitants, is loyalty to their hereditary chieftain; his word is absolute law—life or death—what Ras Hailu says, goes in Gojjam.

## Savage Abyssinia

In his rough highlands he rests secure. Ras Tafari with his government far to the southward in Addis Ababa, beyond that great gash in the face of the earth, the Blue Nile canyon, six thousand feet deep, with but two or possibly three trails that cross—terrible trails—cannot reach him. Ras Hailu's warriors—perhaps more than a hundred thousand—could be concentrated in a week to defend that natural giant's moat, and the Blue Nile almost surrounds his domain. The Sudanese to the westward are separated by league upon league of low, fever country and they are, perhaps, no match for the tall black highlanders anyway.

Several days after crossing the Blue Nile the caravan climbed to the top of a high hill. It was a sort of small plateau and as we came over the crest, there, lined up along the trail, stood at least a thousand men. Guns, the usual Abyssinian smooth bores of ancient make, swung to shoulders, black rhino-hide shields turned forward on brawny black arms, spears, for there were not more than half enough guns to go round, were planted butt to the ground, long blades rising high above dark bearded faces; the martial array was coming to order.

It was a big surprise to burst without warning into the midst of such a businesslike fighting force—it was more than that—it was startling. However, there was nothing to do but carry on and

## Ras Hailu

await developments. Our men were clearly nervous as we rode along that silent, unmoving line. About halfway to the end an old, white turbaned warrior six feet two or three in height, stepped forward. We stopped. The interpreter was right behind and as we drew up, he put a question.

The old man answered in Amharic slowly, with great dignity: "We have come to welcome you to the country of our chief, Ras Hailu. He has heard of your coming—you are Americans—he has never seen Americans—he is impatient to meet you."

We shook hands with this dignified old fellow and returned the compliments of the season, adding that we hoped his master was well.

"He is well by the grace of God," the aged warrior answered without a change of expression, in a tone as serious as if the health of Ras Hailu was a matter of first importance to the entire Universe.

The interpreter explained that the old man was head chamberlain, or master of ceremonies and had been sent by his chief to escort us to a camp at the village of Bichana where the ruler of Gojjam was staying temporarily. The ancient, grizzled warrior waved his hand. Immediately, twenty of the blackest Shankalla slaves that ever were, filed to the front and struck up a weird savage tune on bamboo reed pipes; it was the highland chieftain's slave band—of which he is very proud. Each hollow

## Savage Abyssinia

reed gave but a single note and the tune was carried on by each slave waiting until the proper instant—when his own note was needed; a strange and weird effect they made, blowing lustily, now this pipe, now that, now several at once, then others tuning in from their places in the line, but the whole blending together into a wild, swinging march: It was no Abyssinian tune that—it must have come with the slaves from their dark forests along the Sudanese border.

The head chamberlain signaled and his barbarian force ran forward, surrounding us and our gun-bearers who stuck like leeches beside our saddle mules. And with the slave band piping away as if their lives depended upon the volume of noise they turned out, we marched across the miniature plateau in great state, descended the hill and saw in the distance a huge tent pitched beside a swiftly running stream in a natural grassy meadow. This was to be our camp. The big tent was Ras Hailu's personal dwelling when on the trail and now, the head chamberlain assured us, it had been placed at our disposal.

But we did not march directly to the prepared camp. The warriors would not overlook such an opportunity to impress the people of Bichana village, now gathered upon a hilltop ahead. They escorted us in a winding course—much after the fashion of

## Ras Hailu

a college "snake dance" on a football field. For the shiny, jet black slaves of the band had now warmed to their work and as they marched ahead, pranced, bowed, cake-walked and went through wonderful contortions—but the stately warriors marched steadily with the utmost dignity; the antics of the slaves were beneath their notice.

Our boys, gunbearers and syces, with us at the head of the caravan, were greatly impressed with this reception. Their faces shone. Straight as ramrods, our guns over their shoulders at a rakish angle, they marched with a jaunty swagger, for they dearly loved a brave show, a panoply, such as this; and Ashagri, with his military complex and refreshing memories, no doubt, of his late corporalship in Ras Tafari's army, was in the seventh heaven.

Our tents went up beside the great one already pitched and camp was made in record time. The old warrior at the head of the bodyguard withdrew his force, telling Dabba when he left, that we were expected to call upon Ras Hailu on the morrow. With small fry, village Shums, local chiefs, we always waited in our camp until they called upon us. But Ras Hailu is different. That haughty chieftain has too much prestige to maintain with his people and an outlander would rot in his tracks before the highland ruler would deign to notice him if he failed

## Savage Abyssinia

to make the first ceremonial call. Or, more likely, he and his caravan would be escorted to the boundary of the province—anything might happen.

Left alone, we had an opportunity to examine the mammoth tent. It was all of Abyssinian manufacture and the ground in the large room was covered with soft Persian rugs; beautiful rugs. There was a large vestibule just within the doorway and off the main room was a sizable compartment for the storing of baggage. The three central poles were of thick bamboo covered with rawhide; strong and serviceable, the canvas sides were braced with stout bamboo sticks sewed in; there was no sag in it anywhere. It stood up like a real house.

But Ras Hailu had not yet begun his lavish hospitality: A long line of slaves approached. Some carrying great baskets piled high with flat, native bread, covered with red cloths. Others bore big jars of barley beer and tej, and, bringing up the rear of the procession came a black Shankalla driving a fat brown ox, which waddled contentedly along, having no idea that he, too, was an important part of the peace offering.

The ruler of Gojjam had appointed a major-domo to see that we had everything we wanted while in his province. The man came to the tents the next morning before breakfast. He was a pleasant sort of fellow, dignified, calm and quiet, and stood



## Ras Hailu

in the center of the semi-circle of tents waiting for us to get up.

I happened to step out of my tent first, calling my tentboy, to bring water. The major-domo strode over. It was chilly in the early morning and he was muffled closely in his shamma. He bowed almost to the ground—Ras Hailu's people were always exceedingly polite—took my hand and touched it to his forehead:

"Fenistuly," he said—Good morning.

There was something in the air. That was plain by the hurried words that followed. When the interpreter came we were told that the highland chief sent greetings and invited us to luncheon at his tent, at eleven-thirty:

"He says," the interpreter stated, "that his master is very anxious to see you. He is asking you early so you can talk for an hour before lunch."

About eleven o'clock we had our saddle animals brought up. Syces, gunboys, tentboys and interpreter had been advised earlier to be dressed in their best ready to accompany us,—for no man of the slightest consequence moves in that wild country without retainers. They were thrilled, for Ras Hailu is the great man of the North. Our boys dearly loved ceremonies and the way they turned themselves out made us gasp. Every gun in camp had been spoken for early. Even the two twenty-

## Savage Abyssinia

two rifles, three shotguns, shot pistols and two U. S. Army sixshooters were borrowed. Cartridge belts were crammed with shells, some of them empty cases, to be sure, but still showing the brass and presenting a brave appearance in the eyes of those devoted men.

We set out, the major-domo in the lead, the five members of the expedition next, then marching, all ten abreast, came our boys, rifles slung gallantly over shoulders. Behind, our zebantias trailed, carrying their old black-powder model 1878 shootin' irons. They would have been completely desolated if refused permission to go along. We made an imposing array—from the Abyssinian point of view.

The people of this village had never seen an American before, and as we approached the market place, great throngs stood beside the trail, peering at us curiously. As we neared the stone walls that surrounded the chief's quarters, the crowd became more dense. And drawn up on each side of the entrance was a long line of the chief's men-at-arms. We rode down between these lines, and as we passed, the warriors snapped guns from the usual vertical muzzle-down position, to shoulders, the Abyssinian salute. This half-military, half-savage ceremony delighted our boys and, looking behind, we could see them visibly swell with pride: It was a red letter day in their lives.

## Ras Hailu

Before the big tent with its wings spread wide, held open by slanted poles, stood a group of forty: Ras Hailu's particular associates and advisers, venerable old men for the most part, several with snow white hair. As we approached, marching between the lines of the bodyguard, we sensed a spirit of intense excitement in the group ahead. Curiosity to see what manner of men we were was running high, but the old chief showed, outwardly, no semblance of curiosity. An air of calm, disinterested dignity was the predominant note. The spirit of eagerness was in some way subtly communicated. The Abyssinian of importance considers curiosity something to be indulged in by children and women, not by warriors. The silent group of old chiefs divided and from the center stepped forward a big man, over six feet, very wide in the shoulders and heavily built, wearing a double terai felt hat, of broad brim, a beautiful shamma and black burnous. The expression of his face was stern—almost forbidding. He looked the part of a powerful ruler—every inch of him. The nose was aquiline and the shape and general look of the face was what is commonly called “predatory”: Ras Hailu might have been a Bedouin sheikh from Arabia.

The Old Man of the Gojjam Mountains, who holds the great province with its two million people in the hollow of his hand, ushered us into the tent, where

## Savage Abyssinia

a table had been laid for six. We sat down and our interpreter said the proper things,—thanked him for sending the large force to welcome us and for the gifts of food and for having our camp laid out and big tent pitched. The chief answered that he had sent his entire personal escort—perhaps a thousand, perhaps two thousand men—to one of the crossings of the Nile to bring us on. But, unfortunately, we had come by a different route. He next told the interpreter to inform us that we could have anything we wanted: Money, mules, men, food—"whatever they want," he said, "they shall have." It was a big offer, but I think he meant it—for that is the way Ras Hailu does things.

We stayed from half past eleven until four o'clock in that comfortable tent and there was not a moment when conversation lagged. He speaks no language but his native tongue, Amharic. Therefore, he has never read a book, a newspaper, a magazine or anything more than a letter, for there is no Amharic literature. But his mind was keen and his curiosity about the wonders of other countries was thoroughly alive. He was the most eager for information of any one we had met in Abyssinia.

He had heard of American plows and gasoline tractors and asked first about those: would they be the right things for his people? We told him that with all the labor going to waste in his country, cost-



RAS HAILU,  
THE GREAT MAN  
OF THE NORTH



RAS HAILU'S DAUGHTER,  
WIFE OF THE DEPOSED RULER.  
LIDJ YASU



PRIESTS  
OF THE VILLAGE  
OF WURK





## Ras Hailu

ing practically nothing, he would do well to leave tractors alone. But plows, yes. He should by all means, we advised, import steel plows and throw away the crooked wooden contraptions now in use.

"Even in our country," we explained, "there are many places where tractors do not pay. Here you have plenty of men, plenty of mules, many oxen; what you need is the steel plow."

Somehow we got on the subject of the Great War. Ras Hailu said that he admired America for her part in it:

"I hear that America only went in to stop it—and that she refused all territory, all the spoils, at the end. Is that right?"

"It is," we said.

"I like that. It has not been done very often, fighting for a principle instead of for what can be gotten out of it. Tell me, does England owe America money?"

We told him that also was true. He wanted to hear the exact amount, which, of course we didn't know. But we assured him that loans between nations were customary.

"What is America's income from taxes each year?" was the next question of this information-hungry ruler.

He followed that by a long list of others: what

## Savage Abyssinia

did the taxes amount to on land, on livestock and other things. We were able to give some tentative figures, and Ras Hailu whistled:

“The land in America, the soil, must be very rich.”

He was completely surprised when we assured him that farm land in the United States, even in the best parts of it, is not as good, certainly no better, than that of his own territory of Gojjam. He could not understand how we make our land produce so much. We did our best to explain American farming methods, and he listened closely, eagerly. He is evidently anxious to improve the condition of his people and to make his vast province a more wealthy one.

Maps meant nothing to Ras Hailu—and it was hard to make him understand our answers to his inquiry, “Are there any other lands or countries on the other side, beyond America?” We gave quite a lesson in geography, North and South America were described. Asia, the seven seas, the north and south poles ice-capped and frozen, were vividly drawn. He may not have understood much of that part of the talk, but his interest never flagged. He was consumed with a desire to learn—to know more of the world. His journey to Paris with Ras Tafari had stimulated his curiosity to a high pitch, and unlike Abyssinians who have never been out of their

## Ras Hailu

own country, he had seen and heard enough to want to learn more: What a misfortune it is to a keen-minded man to be brought up in a language that has no literature, no printed word! His eagerness to learn had something childishly pitiful in it. We left the Old-Man-of-the-Gojjam-Mountains late in the afternoon and rode away, escorted by his slave band, our own followers marching behind in proud and rigid line.

The next day Ras Hailu came to our camp for luncheon. Our boys, endeavoring to turn themselves out in what they considered their best, donned every stitch of white man's clothing they had. One of my old and torn coats adorned my tentboy, F'yeesa Boolgoo. An old felt hat of Bailey's crowned Wulda Giorgis, his boy. Ali, Osgood's capable Somali, was arrayed in a gray suit of cast-offs, and Ashagri, with one of my guns which never left his hands while Hailu was in camp, potted about in a pair of gunboat, French army shoes that I had given him because they were too big and heavy for me. Ashagri, like all Abyssinians, had small hands and feet. And those gunboat shoes, being inches too long, turned up in front like the bows of gondolas. His cartridge belt was much in evidence and gleamed with brass shells of many calibers.

Our men never got over thinking that white men's clothing, no matter how disreputable, lent them dis-

## Savage Abyssinia

tion. Dressed in our old clothes, they looked like Alabama niggers, while their own snowy shammas and tight-fitting white trousers set them off to great advantage.

That was a very successful luncheon. The rum bottle circulated freely and later we brought out the guns for a shooting match.

It was a happy thought. All Abyssinians are more interested in guns than in anything else in the world. Since the British, French and Italian agreement of many years' standing, prohibiting the importation of arms and ammunition into the ancient kingdom, modern guns are, to these people, the most desirable things in the world.

When the guns were brought, targets set up and a few rounds had been shot, the old highlander became enthusiastic and while he never lost a certain dignity, he became genial and we saw that we were looked upon no longer as diplomatic visitors but as just what we were: hunters and travelers.

The Abyssinians whom we had seen shoot had little idea of the value of a hind sight. They had been as haphazard and poor shots as could well be imagined, and we were surprised therefore to discover in this chief one who not only thoroughly understood the mechanism of modern rifles, but also knew how to handle them with the best. He knew nothing about shotguns, however, and when

## Ras Hailu

Fuertes took the .20 gauge and, standing in front of his tent, killed three hawks on the fly, the chief could not understand it. We explained shotguns and showed him the shells loaded with many small shot. He was eager to try the shotgun. We did not expect him to have much success at first, but the usual hawks and brown kites were sailing overhead in great numbers. Fuertes stood behind and told him when a bird was within range. He killed five, without a miss, as they flew over. His retainers—something like a hundred had accompanied him and were standing a little distance behind the tents—forgot their dignity when they saw this, to them, wonderful, exhibition of marksmanship. They became voluble, gesticulating and pointing, immensely proud of their chief. If anything could have raised him in their estimation, such shooting was the thing to do it.

Altogether it was a most successful and pleasant afternoon, and when he left, the ruler of Gojjam suggested that we meet him early the next morning about six miles from the village upon a certain hill, a little after sunrise to hunt for reedbuck.

We were late at the rendezvous and he had been waiting. As we approached, riding briskly along the trail, we could see an immense gathering. Most of Ras Hailu's bodyguard were present with innumerable villagers grouped behind. The chief sat

## Savage Abyssinia

upon his big iron-gray mule and, as we approached, came a short way to meet us, surrounded by some two hundred and fifty of his following. A hundred yards away he dismounted and came forward afoot to shake hands. We, of course, did the same, understanding by this time that the proper thing in Abyssinia is to dismount and greet friends on foot.

The great aggregation did not look much like a hunting party to us. It was more of a triumphal procession. The slave band with its bamboo instruments was on hand and struck up a lively tune, and Ras Hailu explained that our first destination was a church—and of the hundreds then with us, all but fifty would remain in the church during the hunt, praying for our success. The church was very old and like most Abyssinian churches, stood in a grove of ancient cedar trees. Our men with the rest, dutifully kissed the stones of the wall and waited outside while the Ras led the way in. A group of twenty priests escorted us through the structure, showing with pride, rugs, tapestries and curious old relics: a drum of silver, old steel helmets and shirts of mail, captured, perhaps, from Arabs who, in turn, may have taken them from Crusaders. They were very old. There were rawhide covered Bibles illustrated with episodes from the Old Testament. The text, of course, had also been done by hand and the



## Ras Hailu

pages were parchment. Only the most gruesome Biblical incidents were portrayed. Abyssinian pictures are the sort that a ten year old child, with no artistic talent, might be expected to paint. The priests hovered about, eager to show everything, and it was quite plain that while their chief was present, they were uncomfortable and uneasy, fearing to make a mistake. The church was built in the usual round style, from immense hewn cedar timbers. The altar,—a tall box-like affair—reposed in the center and we were shown a dead line, or boundary, surrounding the altar beyond which none but priests was allowed. A thin plating of native gold, beaten and burnished, entirely covered the upper half of the altar, attached along the edges by rawhide thongs. Over the main door, in the inside, was an enormous painting depicting Saint George in the act of slaying the dragon—we found this picture of Saint George and the dragon to be in every Abyssinian church we entered, and all very much alike. Saint George,—a typical Abyssinian—was astride a plunging charger. The long-bladed spear in his hand was Galla. Saddle trappings, breast strap, martingale, tail piece and fancy bridle, were in the best Abyssinian taste. The dragon was in his death throes, and a small and superlatively ugly devil, who had evidently been using the dragon for a mount, was groveling horribly in the dust. More works of art adorned the other

## Savage Abyssinia

walls, pictures to show what happened to sinners in the lower regions. Here was one unfortunate, stripped to the skin, feet encased in tight fitting bowls filled with burning oil. The flames were licking his bare shins and he was doing his best to flee from a crowd of pursuing devils armed with pots of blazing oil whose one pleasure seemed to be to splash flames upon the victim. Another depicted the gruesome finish of one who had perhaps done those things which he ought not to have done. The devils had him tied down and were merrily carving him up in sections. In all the pictures the blood flowing was brightly colored and there was plenty of it.

Cheered and braced by the sight of these horrors, we remounted and accompanied by some fifty retainers on foot and six young men mounted upon Ras Hailu's best horses, set out for a valley where reedbuck had been reported. The mounted men scouted to the right and to the left while we rode along sedately on our mules. It was not long before a scout came dashing back with the information that game had been sighted. Ras Hailu had been admiring my gun, carrying and weighing it in his hand. I proposed that he use it for the first shot, but the reedbuck, when we saw it, was at least 350 yards and the Ras insisted that I shoot from that distance. The range was much too far for so small an animal and I did my best to persuade him



BEFORE THE CHIEF'S QUARTERS



RAS HAILU'S BODY GUARD



HUMPED CATTLE OF GOJJAM



## Ras Hailu

to shoot. He knew too much about guns, however, and signified politely but firmly for me to try a shot. There was nothing else to do and I sat down, took sight and missed. As the animal bounded away, I shot two or three more times and managed to break a leg. The next discovered was a small oribi. The retainers surrounded it in high grass and the Ras took my gun and dismounting, walked forward. The little animal jumped up in the center of the circle, not more than 75 yards away, and darted off on the run. The Ras snapped the light Springfield to his shoulder. The oribi fell; the bullet had gone through the heart. It was a lucky shot, the wide circle of retainers standing—some of them—almost in the line of fire, without concern for their own skins. Again his men were overjoyed at his marksmanship, ascribing nothing to luck where their chief was concerned.

It was almost noon by this time, and as no more game was in sight, it was decided to return for lunch. On the way, we passed close to a village and the population issued forth. They rushed up and bowed heads to the ground before their master, much excited to meet him so near their homes. He turned to us and said that we were all asked to the village for lunch.

"If you don't mind, I would like to do them this favor." The moment he answered in the affirma-

## Savage Abyssinia

tive, a great shout went up. The crowd ran ahead, dancing in the most grotesque manner, chanting an impromptu refrain in which we could hear the name "Ras Hailu!" constantly repeated. Speedy runners had been sent ahead, and when we arrived among the grass huts, a canopy had been erected in a grove of trees. Native couches of cedar with rawhide lacings for springs had been placed beneath. We sat cross legged upon the couches and watched the performance: the dancing, the chanting and the wild demonstration of the villagers in honor of their chief.

Ras Hailu was very much on his dignity during this ceremony. And it was plain that his people held him not only in awe but in sincere esteem. A meal was placed before us, tej was brought and while we ate and drank, seated upon the couches, shammas were taken off and tied together to form a cloth screen; it is not considered fitting for common people to look on while a chief eats and the screen remained in place until Ras Hailu had finished.

The villagers escorted us in a body for a mile on our way. The dancing continued as we rode along and the chanting never ceased for a moment. The mounted men raced back and forth.

Our next meeting with the northern potentate occurred the afternoon of the following day.



## Ras Hailu

He sent a messenger to camp in the morning, asking us to meet him at one of his other villages, six miles away, where he was giving a raw meat feast in memory of his father who had died upon that day some years previously. Would we like to join him?

According to our plans, we were dividing the expedition that morning into two parties: Osgood and Fuertes were to proceed along the west side of Lake Tsana for birds and small mammals, while Bailey, Cutting and I were to take the east shore of the lake to Gondar,—on the way to the Simien country for ibex.

The village was directly on our route and we sent word that the three in our party would meet him in the afternoon. When we arrived, the banquet had been going on for hours, but the chief left the assemblage and, with the usual large following, came a short way to meet us, dismounting in the ceremonious Abyssinian manner. A wide shelter of branches had been erected in the center of the village;—it covered an acre or more. Long, narrow tables of bamboo, raised about two feet above the ground, had been erected, and squatting upon both sides of these, men, hundreds, were seated. Slaves passed back and forth carrying great joints of meat—raw. We followed down an aisle and came to seats that had been prepared for us beneath a round, gayly colored awning. Food was brought—huge

## Savage Abyssinia

baskets of bread, tej, beer, and finally baskets of raw meat: A large chunk would be held in the left hand with the fingers spread wide apart. The long knife in the right passed between the fingers as the cut was made. Half a dozen priests, high in the councils of the church, had a place of honor, directly behind, and back and forth in front of them marched an ancient incense bearer, swinging a copper vessel which gave out a dense white smoke from perfumed wood. It had an unpleasant odor, and we were glad the ancient remained close to the clerical delegation. We were curious to know how the custom of eating meat raw, "broundo" as they call it, originated. Through the interpreter our host explained:

"Raw meat eating is not really one of the ancient customs with us, although we have been doing it for a great many years. Our country was invaded at one time—so long ago that I don't know who the invaders were—but the Abyssinians were defeated and driven into the mountains in small bands, where they were forced to hide. But a great many were discovered and butchered, betrayed by the smoke of their cooking fires. It was then that our people began to eat meat raw. We have since kept up the custom and now prefer it raw to any other way."

The feast was in full swing about us. The gathering was putting away prodigious quantities of raw

## Ras Hailu

flesh. Tej, and beer, carried in earthen jars between the low tables were being consumed in great quantities. Musicians strolled back and forth through the crowd, playing strange tunes upon single stringed instruments. The note was varied by sliding a finger up and down and the musical result was weird and plaintive.

A nondescript old man worked his way in and touched head to the ground before Ras Hailu. He wore a single skin, black and greasy with age, and as he bowed forehead to the ground, mumbled continually. The Ras explained that he was a friar belonging to a mendicant traveling order, a sect whose members have no homes but spend their lives upon the trails. The old man mewed and chattered in a half-witted sort of way.

"He is telling us his troubles. He has given away everything he owned in the world but the skin upon his back. He is old and sick but says he will continue his good works until he dies."

A slave was ordered to bring him food, and when this arrived, the friar, seated upon the ground, bowed his head mumbling continually, and made mysterious passes above the food baskets; then fell to and ate like a wolf.

A young boy, about ten years of age, marched through the crowd and bowed to the ground before us. He spoke in a parrot-like tone a short piece,

## Savage Abyssinia

which, the interpreter explained, was to the effect that Ras Hailu was the greatest, most generous and most powerful ruler in the world. One of the retainers behind Ras Hailu's seat was told to confer upon the child a small bar of salt—salt bars about eighteen inches long, three inches thick and the same in width pass as currency, four to the dollar, all through Northern Abyssinia. The lad took the salt, bowing to the ground, and turning, marched out like a little major.

It is customary for a chief when he gives a banquet to his people, to remain until the end, lending dignity to the occasion. At first, the more substantial citizens are fed. After they have finished, those of lesser rank come in; after these, still a third delegation,—what might be called the lower strata of the commons,—arrives. We left, after about three hours, and Ras Hailu agreed to drop in, at our camp beyond the village, for dinner.

It was raining hard that night when the chief of Gojjam arrived shortly after dark with fully five hundred retainers. We went out to meet him as he dismounted. He was always ceremonious, taking off his hat and advancing to shake hands while his men stood behind, in a solid phalanx, guns over shoulders. We ushered him into a tent and seated him at the head of the table. His nephew, Dilnessa, stood behind his chair, our tentboys behind ours.

## Ras Hailu

The rain was coming down in torrents and the big drops sounded like machine gun bullets on the tent fly.

We had no sooner sat down than Dilnessa jumped at a sign from his chief and motioned to one of the men-at-arms who stood outside in the rain. The man signaled brought in decanters of tej, a special sauce, reams of native bread, drinking cups made from the horns of buffalo and three big rings—about three inches in diameter, of solid gold, from the ledges of Ras Hailu's mountains. The gold was so pure it was soft as lead.

"I want you to keep these," the chief said as he presented one to each of us, "as something with which to remember Gojjam and Ras Hailu."

He had sent three fine big riding mules to camp as presents earlier in the evening and we had not yet thanked him for those. We tried to express our appreciation for the mules and the gold rings, but Ras Hailu would not listen. He smiled and changed the subject.

Picturesque as a knight of the Middle Ages, the old highlander sat at the head of the table. Through the interpreter he told of great deeds in the old days: The battle of Addua in which he had fought when a mere boy. He recounted exciting and bloody incidents in the long warfare between his father and the Sudanese to the westward. The Beni-



## Savage Abyssinia

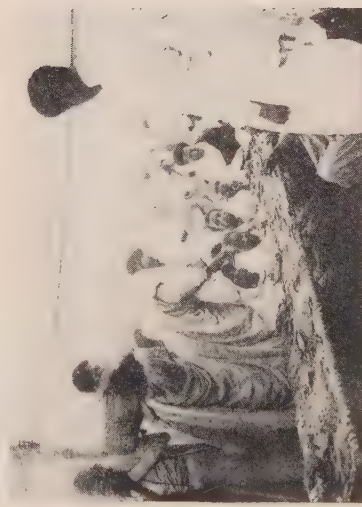
Shangul—if I remember correctly,—had given more trouble than the rest. He discoursed on the subject of the Dankalis,—those wild tribesmen who have fought the Abyssinians for generations and are still doing it. He explained Abyssinian battle tactics, spear fencing, the art of wielding the long blade. He told an amusing tale of his grandfather who had led a successful army against savage invaders from parts unknown. He laughed and chuckled at the craft of his ancient forbear. Upon that occasion the enemy had many more men and the Hailu grandparent was greatly worried about the impending battle. Unable to sleep that night he was pacing back and forth when a lion leaped the thorn boma surrounding the temporary camp and killed a sleeping man, being promptly speared by another warrior :

“It was then,” said Hailu, “that my grandfather arranged his thoughts,”—a quaint way of putting it —“and remembered that it was the custom of the tribe he was fighting to make a big feast whenever a chief killed a lion.” Here he paused and chuckled delightedly. “So my grandfather called his men, told them of this feast-making custom, and outlined his scheme. Early the next morning he sent an emissary with the lion-skin to the camp of the enemy.” The messenger had been coached, had his speech by heart. “He reported to the enemy that the lion had been killed in the night by my ancestor





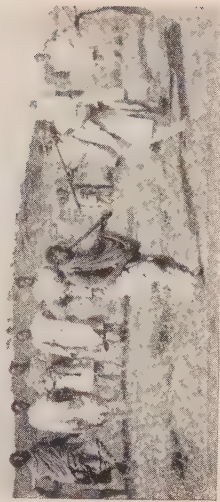
IN OUR HONOR: A RAW MEAT FEAST



RAW FLESH WAS THE MAIN DISH



WARRIORS OF RAS HAILU



A WEIRD DANCE BY THE SLAVE BAND



## Ras Hailu

and therefore there could be no battle that day for, of course, both armies would remain in their respective camps, feasting and drinking in celebration, according to the ancient custom.

"About noon," the story-teller continued, "when the enemy was pretty far gone with tej and beer, over the hill, on the run, came my grandfather and his zebantias!—Whack! Stab! Thrust!" And the Hailu eyes danced in the candlelight as he illustrated graphically, with powerful arms, the play of spears, thrusting, jabbing and cutting down imaginary enemies, to the great peril of our rickety camp table. The illustration of spear work showed that the chief himself had been at one time an experienced wielder of the long blade. His thrusts were invariably followed by the more deliberate motion of withdrawing the blade from the slain man's body and wiping it clean on the grass. It was an extremely well acted pantomime; the dark eagle face, with its Arab features, shone, the black eyes gleamed and giant shadows coursed like swift dream figures across the wall of the tent.

Our tent boys leaned forward still as statues done in black marble: anything Ras Hailu could say would be sure to be treasured up in the memories of those boys—but this tale struck an answering chord: they drank in the words like mother's milk—spellbound.

## Savage Abyssinia

It was a memorable evening; the talk ran on until midnight while outside the rain continued to come down in sheets. Saddle mules rattled bits and accouterments and the big escort, Ras Hailu's men-at-arms, waited, drenched to the skin but silent and uncomplaining while their hereditary chieftain dined in the camp of the three Ferengies—strangers from a great country overseas.

We were to break camp and leave in the morning on our way to the village of Gondar and the high Simien for ibex. The chief of Gojjam announced that he would be on hand early to see us off. A little after sunrise we saw him coming up the hill,—as usual mounted upon his big quick-stepping mule and surrounded by his large force. The packs were on the mules, but before we set out the Ras suggested that perhaps it might be a good thing for him to make a short talk to our men. We lined them up: he stepped out in front and, speaking in a low, even voice, said:

“These Ferengies are great friends of mine. They are in a country strange to them; they do not speak the language; they do not know the customs of our country. You are Abyssinians. While they are here they are guests of your country. They have employed you to do certain things for them. You are their servants. You must do these things to the best of your ability. It must not be said that our

## Ras Hailu

country does not look after or make easy the path of strangers. You must obey your employers. And if you do your part, they will treat you well. You are going into a country where you may encounter shiftas. Carry yourselves bravely and remember that you must do your best to protect these people, these friends of mine from a far country."

As he finished, the two leaders among our men—Ashagri and Agaboru, dropped to the ground as if shot. I was never more surprised in my life—the speech had gotten beneath their skins and, although those two were as independent and self-contained usually as you will ever see, they were not ashamed to kiss the foot of the old chief.

It was a particularly well-chosen talk and came at a time when some of our men were beginning to feel dissatisfied. They had been a long time away from home. The trails had been rough and long and many of them were tired. It was just the thing needed to buck them up. It had a most salutary effect.

But Ras Hailu's hospitality had by no means ended when we left him. He sent with us two men whose business it was not only to act as guides, but every evening to call upon the village nearest our camp and present to the Shum, or headman, Ras Hailu's letter which instructed him to send us one sheep, three hundred pieces of bread, six jars of barley

## Savage Abyssinia

beer, two jugs of tej, six chickens and, as the letter put it, "eggs until they tell you not to bring any more."

Those daily gifts were positively embarrassing. Our men could eat the bread, chickens and eggs, but a sheep a day was too much. We tried time after time to send the sheep back, but found refusing gifts in Abyssinia one of the most difficult things to do.

No matter how we explained that we had plenty of meat, duiker, reedbuck, oribi, and other game, or had plenty of mutton left from the day before, the villagers would refuse to take the sheep back and insisted upon tying it in camp by the hind leg to a stake. We could not drive the sheep along and the only thing to do was to kill them and dry the meat. Before we reached the limits of Ras Hailu's territory, our packs were heavy with dried meat. Such hospitality, I suppose, would not be met with anywhere else in the world.



## CHAPTER XIII

DEJASMATCH AYALU

**W**E left Ras Hailu's country with regret and almost a month later, after crossing Amhara, the Portuguese seventeenth century castles crowning the hills at Gondar came into view.

Dominating the region for miles the principal building, a magnificent example of the seventeenth century citadel, stands, a monument to one of the most romantic gestures in the history of the world. Its towers and keep, its dungeons, its dark, narrow dens—once the quarters of lions kept for the amusement of the commander of the garrison—its high surrounding wall, stables, outhouses, guard rooms, sentry boxes all built of native stone; solid, massive, enduring through the centuries, although in a ruinous state, are still, speaking in terms of ancient ruins, in a fair state of repair.

The main fortress, with five smaller, attendant castles upon neighboring hills once changed the valley of Gondar into an impregnable highland stronghold. With infinite labor that little company of Portuguese adventurers built for permanence and the great walls will remain standing for many years

## Savage Abyssinia

to come. In 1640 the Portuguese expedition disembarked from the ships of Vasco da Gama, master mariner, on the coast of the Red Sea, near what is now Massowa and fought their way inland to the village of Gondar.

For rumors had reached Europe a few years earlier, reports, traveling, God knows how, over the vast deserts of north Africa,—by word of mouth perhaps—through tribes of fierce Arabs, savage Sudanese, Turks and that host of barbarians who fought, massacred and plundered from Ethiopia to the Mediterranean. The rumors, when they reached feudal Europe, had it that somewhere in the cold highlands, more than a year's journey south of Egypt, dwelt a Christian king, one Prester John, sorely beset by hosts of Moslem fanatics, bravely fighting to retain his country and his religion against overwhelming odds.

What more natural in that chivalrous day than for the Portuguese, then a race of dauntless navigators and valiant explorers, to equip a relief expedition, knights in armor, men-at-arms, arquebusiers; men the caliber of Spanish Cortez, Coronado and the cruel but brave Pizarro, and to send them, with the inevitable friars, to the aid and succor of the beleaguered African highlanders—for the glory of the Christian God and Portuguese arms.

The rumors turned out to be true. For at that

## Dejasmatch Ayalu

time Mohammed Gran, Arab conqueror, was sweeping through the country with fire and sword, the Koran in one hand, the scimitar in the other, devastating, murdering, plundering—for the glory of the Moslem God and Arab arms. The doughty Portuguese knights with their retainers formed an alliance with the Abyssinian chiefs, fought off the invading Mussulman hosts and set to work to construct impregnable strongholds, frowning castles after the latest European design.

For thirty years, with a great number of slaves, they labored upon the battlements and towers of this great castle at Gondar. The friars of the expedition meanwhile laboring throughout the province of Amhara to remold Abyssinian Christianity nearer to the heart's desire of the Spanish and Portuguese inquisitors; fanatic, bigoted, cruel—but doing their duty as they saw it regardless of life, liberty or things temporal.

The military part of the expedition did its work nobly. The castle was impregnable against the spears and swords of the dashing Moslem horsemen, and six high, arching bridges were constructed of stone, two spanning the Abbai, or Blue Nile, near its source where it divides Amhara from Gojjam and the savages of the south. All six were placed at strategic points so that even during the rainy season, when rivers were impassable by ford the defenders

## Savage Abyssinia

of the Faith with their Amharic allies could pass back and forth upon military forays. Five smaller castles were built within a few miles of the great stone fortress upon the hill and the province of Amhara was secure from the age-old menace of Mohammedanism.

But now the Catholic friars must have become too zealous. Burning with eagerness to gain converts, they may have gone too far and adopted those methods used by Pizarro and his conquerors in Peru. Anyway, the Amharic kings, forgetting the timely assistance of the white adventurers, rebelled against them and with the help of wild tribesmen from Gojjam and other provinces, Portuguese knights, men-at-arms, arquebusiers, friars and acolytes, one and all, from the stern commander of the great castle down to the most insignificant menial, were expelled from the country.

With the Portuguese banished forever and all Europeans excluded from the land, things promptly settled down again to the ancient state of inaction. Grass and weeds ran riot in the courtyard of the castle; the life-giving well within the walls, filled up with dirt and sand. The massive cedar doors, hewn by hand from immense logs, swung loose on soft iron hinges. Years passed. The heavy portcullis fell and the narrow stone causeway leading to the main entrance, crumbled. A section of the roof

## Dejasmatch Ayalu

caved in carrying to the dungeons below, a rubble of stone, timbers and mortar. Doves came to nest by hundreds in the niches and crannies of the walls, entering and leaving by the narrow slits, windows once used by bearded arquebusiers; ports through which to shoot in defending the stronghold. And now hyena and jackal, hyrax and lizard, hold high revel in those silent, crumbling halls; and, as the old Arabian had it:

“The lion and the lizard keep  
The courts where Jamshyd gloried and  
drank deep.  
And Bahram, that great hunter;  
The wild ass stamps o’er his head but cannot  
break his sleep.”

Generations of Abyssinians have come and gone. But the lesson of the hardy builders is lost. The grass tukuls of the inhabitants of Gondar surround the old pile. Boys, mostly jet black Shankalla slaves, herd a few goats and cattle upon the hillsides. Women carry heavy earthen jars of water up the long, steep hill. There is no farming, no building. The “streets” of the village are deep in dust and so filled with sharp rocks that a mule can scarcely pass from one end to the other without accident. Although Gondar is the largest village in the northern

[ 275 ]



## Savage Abyssinia

half of the country, sugar, candles, grain, tobacco, kerosene for the cook's lantern, blankets—in fact nothing can be bought. But crowds of native priests recline in the shade of the round, grass-roofed church. Its walls are blazoned with stiff pictures of the terrors of hell. The years roll by in endless procession. Nothing has changed and if the adventurous Portuguese should return from their sleep of three centuries they would find the people of Gondar just as they found them in the year that Vasco da Gama sailed away down the Red Sea and left them, a little band of devoted religious enthusiasts, standing bareheaded upon the burning sands.

Dejasmatch Ayalu's stronghold was chosen from motives of defense alone. Five days' march north of Gondar we saw it, upon the flat top of a butte that rose five hundred feet above the high plain overlooking the country for thirty miles. Its western side is impregnable. Cliffs fall away seven thousand feet, for the round butte lies upon the very edge of the southern extension of the great Simien escarpment. To the north the drop is much the same and the southern face of the butte is almost sheer for five hundred feet. The only approach is from the eastward. On that side the high plateau rises gradually until it reaches the base of the butte



## Dejasmatch Ayalu

but even there only one trail is possible; a zigzag pathway through the rocks, steep and difficult. Around the foot of the butte cluster the grass tukuls of the village of Davart; the top is given over solely to the defenses of the Dejasmatch and the mud plastered dwelling of his immediate retainers.

It had taken us forty days' continuous travel to reach the country of the Dejasmatch Ayalu. And we had sent word ahead that we would arrive upon a certain day—it is always well in Abyssinia to announce your arrival, that there shall be no misunderstanding. Six miles from the village an escort of fifty men under a subchief met us and led the way to a nearby stream. We were ordered, in the name of the ruler of Simien, to camp there. The Dejasmatch would receive us in the morning.

We never know our luck. Here we were thinking that we had been most fortunate in avoiding shiftas, complications with chiefs and other troubles, when things took another turn. A development occurred that we had not figured upon.

About three o'clock that afternoon four well mounted men came galloping over the hill from the direction of the Dejasmatch's stronghold. We watched them come, knowing by the breakneck speed that something was up. They charged down to the creek in front of the tents, took the watercourse at a leap and reined plunging horses back on hind feet:

## Savage Abyssinia

The cruel Abyssinian bits, when applied sharply, will almost yank a horse over backwards.

All four animals were gayly caparisoned, evidently mounts of persons of some importance: bright colored saddle cloths, embroidered with gold or silver threads, wide breast straps of round silver disks, looped together with rawhide thongs, high-peaked saddles of red leather and gay tail-pieces, also of looped silver disks, were picturesque in the extreme. Surely here were men of consequence and one held a letter in a split stick.

It was awkward, for the interpreter had gone to the village and would not be back until night. The message might be important—coming, as we knew it did, from Dejasmach Ayalu. Alamayu, Bailey's syce, could read Amharic but spoke only a few words of English. He was called and after reading the letter became greatly excited:

"Oh!" he gasped, while our whole force gathered around him. "Oh, it is kufanoo"—bad—and he went on at a great rate in Amharic to the other boys. Their faces registered astonishment and alarm in equal parts. We began to wonder if Dejasmach Ayalu had ordered us to quit his country forthwith, or what. The four horsemen stood beside their lathered animals fearfully agitated, as if they expected the heavens to fall at any moment.

"Very kufanoo!" exclaimed Alamayu, highly

## Dejasmatch Ayalu

excited. "You—tolo, tolo,"—quick quick—"go!"

"Go where," we asked, "and why?"

"Dejatch Ayalu—tolo, tolo—you take ferass"—horse—"you run."

We tried to figure it out. Dejasmatch Ayalu had sent for us in a hurry. That seemed to be clear. Then Alamayu threw more light on the subject by patting his stomach and saying:

"Tinish—tinish—" little, little—"kufanoo."

"Oh," we said. "Dejasmatch Ayalu has a little stomach ache?"

"Yellum, yellum!"—no, no!—he cried, now becoming positively inflamed; "sett, sett"—woman, woman—"Dejatch Ayalu sett."

"Oho, so Dejasmatch Ayalu's wife has a little stomach ache?"

"Yellum! yellum!"—no, no—"tinish, tinish!"

At that information Bailey, Cutting and I withdrew to talk it over.

"I think I know what's up," Bailey volunteered, "the Dejasmatch's wife is about to increase the population. He knows white folks always carry medicine and know something about doctoring. He wants help. Can any of us 'born' a child?"

"Certainly not," Cutting answered, a scared look coming over his face. "And I'd sooner be shot than try!"

An idea occurred to me: "That's just the way I

## Savage Abyssinia

feel about it but—suppose we utterly ignore his hurry up call for assistance? He'll think we can do the trick—they all think Ferengies can do about anything with medicine. One of us has got to go and at least explain that we don't know anything about such matters. Then if he insists, we'll have to do what we can. Otherwise you can't tell what may happen. Don't forget, he rules here with an iron hand. We'd have a slim chance to hunt ibex in his country if we refuse to help. We dare not ignore this summons!"

"That's all right," interrupted Cutting, "but suppose one of us does go—and the woman dies! Think that one over!"

"She won't die," Bailey returned, "they have babies in this country as easily as cows have calves. Give her a sugar pill, aspirin, or something harmless and tell them to proceed along their usual lines."

It was decided that some one had to go and I lost the toss so it was up to me. I mounted, and with the four distracted horsemen and the good wishes of Bailey and Cutting, set out at a gallop.

It was about six miles and I had plenty of time to figure out just what to say when I should arrive. If possible I wanted to turn the affair over to the usual people who handle such things in the village. At least I was determined they should do the heavy work. If worse came to worse and I had to take a

## Dejasmatch Ayalu

hand, I intended to stand around, a sort of master of ceremonies, the picture of scientific wisdom, administer a sugar pill at intervals and hope for the best. "Let nature take its course," was to be my watchword.

When about halfway to the village, a party of five or six mounted men came galloping up. They were just from the Dejasmatch's house. They made signs for me to turn back. I showed the letter. Yes, they knew all about it:

"Bukra," the headman said in Arabic—meaning to-morrow, come to-morrow. It was with the feelings of one reprieved from the gallows that I turned campward. Fortunately, the child arrived during the night and we were not called upon to interfere in that complicated affair.

While on the subject of things medical—there are no Abyssinian doctors—the priests attempt to cure the sick. A person with a broken leg would be attended by one of the numerous representatives of the clergy from the nearest church; prayers would be said, incantations pronounced and perhaps sacred earth that has been blessed would be thrown upon the wound. If the patient survives, the mysterious power of the church is vindicated. If he dies, a failure to cure is laid to outside influences.

Early next morning we set out for the village of Davart—the seat of Dejasmatch Ayalu. Two miles



## Savage Abyssinia

from the village, in the center of the flat plain, about three hundred armed men were drawn up in military formation. Nondescript Khaki uniforms and Turkish fezzes seemed to be the order of the day and the captain of the contingent, as he saw us drawing near followed by our packtrain, rushed back and forth, aligning the ranks and putting things in order. He saluted bravely with a large, thick saber and we rode between the lines of rifles.

As the retainers of Ras Hailu had done, these soldiers fell in, half in front and half behind and led the way toward the conical butte. The sides of the hill, we could now see, were lined with people, villagers out to have a look at the Ferengies. And at the beginning of the steep climb, twenty-five horsemen—on the best horses we had seen in Abyssinia—carrying spears and arrayed in their whitest shammas, bearing shields and a few guns slung over shoulders, pranced into the lead. They made a fine, picturesque showing with flowing clothes, long, bright lances, jingling bits and silver-mounted saddle-trappings.

It was a steep climb to the top and our poor animals, most of which had been on the trail steadily, without rest, for exactly forty days, were blowing hard when we reached the crest. Dejasmach Ayalu's seat was indeed a stronghold in the African sense of the term: the house was surrounded by a





THE HORSEMEN OF DEJASMATCH AYALU ARRIVE



HOMES IN PARADE DRESS



THE VANGUARD OF THE CHIEF'S GREAT RETINUE



## Dejasmatch Ayalu

stone wall six feet high from which rose a much higher palisade of timber. Where the palisade joined the wall were chevaux-de-frise of spiked stakes jutting out at right angles. The palisade had been built without the use of nails or wire: strongly bound together with thick vines and withes.

Two lines of Dejasmatch Ayalu's retainers were drawn up outside the gate. There must have been a thousand. While within the outer gate—there were two gates in two separate walls—about a thousand more men-at-arms, with rifles of a dozen ancient makes at the "present arms," stood in parallel lines reaching to the door of the Dejasmatch's house.

The house was two-storied with an outside staircase leading to a porch above. The Dejasmatch came down smiling affably and greeted us with evident pleasure. He led the way to the main reception and dining room above. The outside walls of the crude house, we had time to notice, were decorated with colored pictures done in typical Abyssinian style: Black Shankallas, Nubians and Sudanese savages were being dealt with in vigorous fashion by stiff, wooden Abyssinian soldiers. Bullets were shown flying through the air, leaving a streak of destruction from the muzzles of Abyssinian guns to vital points in the anatomy of the routed and fleeing enemy; every shot told and the

## Savage Abyssinia

valor and glory of the Abyssinians was something to be wondered at. But on the upstairs porch two machine guns, one of very old make broken beyond repair and the other fairly modern and seemingly in good condition, were trained on the gate. The place gave the impression of being the stronghold of a man who doesn't intend to be taken.

The Dejasmatch, we found upon closer acquaintance, is a man of remarkably quick and intelligent mind considering the fact that he has never seen the outside world and of course has never read a line about it—the only language he speaks being Amharic, which, as has been mentioned before, has no printed word. In his youth, however, he lived for several years at Addis Ababa and there acquired his, for that country, advanced ideas. But the Dejasmatch, unlike Ras Hailu, had little curiosity concerning lands beyond his own. But in matters Abyssinian he was well posted and eager to learn. Our impressions of Ras Tafari and Ras Hailu interested him greatly; Ras Hailu perhaps the more. He inquired about Ras Hailu's health, his age, his build; "Is he taller and heavier than I?" "Does he govern his province well?" "Are his people contented?" "Has he as good horses as there are in my country?" A hundred questions he asked—all to do with Abyssinia.

Dejasmatch Ayalu is a short, heavy-set man of

## Dejasmatch Ayalu

fairly light complexion. About forty-five years of age, vigorous and nervously active, he gave the impression of restless strength; of both mind and body. He is not unaware of his high position and speaks with a quick decisiveness that shows long habit of command. Dressed in snowy shamma, white, tight-fitting pantaloons and light blue cloak with edges of gold braid, he was an impressive figure. European patent leather shoes encased the small feet, for his territory is not more than ten days' travel from the Italian colony of Erytrea and foreign goods can be easily imported, as we realized when he ordered set upon the luncheon table eighteen bottles—all different—of Italian wines and liqueurs.

It seems to be the height of politeness in Abyssinia to inquire the age of a visitor and the Dejasmatch showed us that attention early and requested us to guess his age. As a matter of policy we guessed forty; an age we thought five or six years too young.

"That is correct," he answered with satisfaction.

The topic of most interest to all Abyssinians—guns—was broached and the Dejasmatch sent a servant to bring his private armory. One, I remember, was a very old eight bore double barreled elephant gun—a German piece. The cartridges must have been made anywhere from ten to twenty years ago and looked like one-pounder shells. I should be afraid to guess the weight of that ancient mass of

## Savage Abyssinia

steel; a strong man could just lift it to his shoulder. But two modern high-power rifles of English make were brought and these the Dejasmatch fondled lovingly. And we saw that he knew rifles, perhaps even better than Ras Hailu. Our guns were closely examined:

"What price could I buy U. S. Army rifles for?" he asked, and whistled at the tentative figure we quoted. There was no mention made of the British, French and Italian agreement preventing the importation of guns and ammunition. It was, possibly, a galling subject and as we were not in the business of gun-running we avoided it. But he surprised us by stating that he could buy guns—all he wanted—from the Italians for two dollars, Abyssinian, each. If the price was correct they would be the type of ancient relic now in use in his country; harmless against modern rifles but useful in impressing the natives under his jurisdiction.

He was a genial host and as the luncheon party progressed became quite jovial:

"Which one of you will stay here and live with me? I'll make him a chief, give him land, cattle, a big tukul and plenty of slaves."

Bailey and I replied that Cutting would be only too glad of the chance—that he was unmarried and was therefore the one to remain.

"All right," returned the Dejasmatch, "then I'll



## Dejasmatch Ayalu

give him his selection of wives. Many to choose from." And then he made the surprising remark:

"And they won't be black like I am, either."

The proposal was made in a half-joking way but I have an idea that Ayalu, who has the reputation of being partial to Ferengies, would have lived up to his end of the bargain if one of us had elected to remain. And he added:

"Indeed I will do just what I say. I have given the word of a Dejasmatch—and that cannot be broken like promises of the common people."

We were eager to obtain all the information we could about the ibex country of Simien, its difficulties and dangers, the best route of approach and the exact localities where walia ibex ranged.

"If you take my advice," he said, "you'll stay right here and let me send some of my hunters. They can bring you back plenty of walia and you will be taking no risks. Ferengies cannot go where the walia live. For you cannot get along without shoes and no man with shoes can negotiate those tremendous cliffs and almost vertical escarpments; it's impossible. Oh, you might get two or three small walia without going into the dangerous places—but not big ones with great horns."

We thanked, but reminded him that we had journeyed all the way from Addis Ababa to try conclusions with the walia ibex and had no intention

## Savage Abyssinia

of allowing some one to do our shooting for us. We explained that we had hunted the mountain sheep of our own country and Canada and Cutting told of shooting ibex in the Thian Shan mountains of Asia with the Roosevelt expedition. We added that we thought we could go anywhere upon the steep and rugged heights that his hunters could.

But that statement, as we found later, was too optimistic—for none of us had ever encountered, anywhere in the world, such mountaineers as the stalwart black, barefooted highlanders of the Simien.

“All right, you have my permission to hunt walia in my country and I will send a Garasmatch”—minor chief—“with an escort of zebanias to compel the natives to furnish you with scouts and guides. They know the country and you will find them of great assistance.”

Four miles north of the hill stronghold of the Dejasmatch, a magnificent peak reared its rocky head over twelve thousand feet into the blue. We came within sight of it three days' march to the southward. It was like a mammoth milestone, a giant rocky finger showing the right direction and from our camp in the high Simien, later, we could look back and still see it; solitary, sharp, perfect in form—a great landmark—a guide to caravans for sixty miles in any direction. In shape it resembled

## Dejasmatch Ayalu

the Matterhorn, especially when viewed from the southwest; the same striking, sheer sweep of wall and cliff, the same steeple-like summit. Its western side fell away in a line of straight cliffs—a drop of eight thousand feet to the lowlands that lead to the Takazze river. At the western base lay a perfect inferno of distorted and ravaged Bad Lands, piled and tangled.

From the east, the Simien plateau rose gently toward its base, sweeping forward in a series of rolling hills and broad, level plains of scattered acacia trees with flat tops. It was a hospitable land upon this side with streams swiftly flowing and natural pastures of long grass interspersed with flowering shrubs. There are higher mountains in Simien but few in all Abyssinia so striking, so perfect in form. And there is none in the north country that can be seen from anything like the distance—so fine a landmark.

For a thousand years that peak has been a guidepost to caravans on the long journey from the interior to the Red Sea. In the old days, slave caravans from the low, unhealthy country of the blacks to the southwestward bound for the sea to ship living wares to the markets of Arabia, followed the trail that passes its foot. And in those troublous times that rough country was the scene of many a bloody encounter. Powerful brigand chiefs from

## Savage Abyssinia

the high Simien swooped down upon the slave traders and took toll in "black ivory." And the locality is not yet quiet. The zebanias of Dejasmatch Ayalu occasionally make punitive expeditions into that wild area.

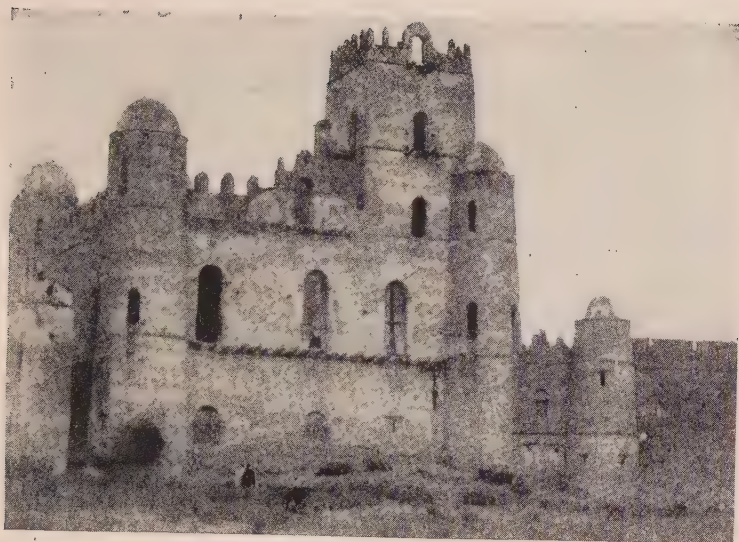
We had the Dejasmatch to dinner at our camp near the base of the mountain. He arrived, of course, with an enormous escort: horsemen, warriors on foot, zebanias and retainers. The head chamberlain carried three fine leopard skins, large, soft and beautiful. The Dejasmatch presented one to each of us along with rings made from gold mined in his country—identical with those thrust upon us by Ras Hailu. Ayalu made a pretty speech, saying that, as we were the first Americans to enter his country he wished to do something in honor of the occasion.

When it came our turn to reply we thanked him for the gifts and for permission to hunt in his country:

"But," we added, "there is one thing—one request we would like to make—" The Dejasmatch interrupted:

"Whatever you want, you can have."

We pointed to the solitary peak: "That big mountain, that ancient landmark looming up there to the northward—we should very much like to bear the name of an American."



ANCIENT PORTUGUESE CASTLE IN THE HEART OF ABYSSINIA



DEJASMATCH AYALU'S STRONGHOLD







## Dejasmatch Ayalu

The Dejasmatch called his scribe—a small boy. The lad unslung from his shoulder a rawhide case containing ink and a quill pen. The Dejasmatch waited for the name while his bodyguard crowded closely around—what queer business was this the Ferengies were up to?

“We should like to have you call that mountain ‘Strong’s Peak,’ after Walter Strong, who, by making this expedition possible, has done much to give Americans a clear understanding of Abyssinia.”

The chief turned to his retainers: “It is my wish that all shall refer hereafter to that mountain as Strong’s Peak.” And he directed the scribe to write down the name as it sounded in Amharic characters that there should be no mistake about it in the future.



## CHAPTER XIV

### IBEX ON THE HEIGHTS OF SIMIEN

**T**HE Dejasmatch Ayalu sent us northward under escort of one of his favorite chiefs and ten warriors. It was a happy arrangement, for the dusky "ledge-trotters" of that remote section, without such show of force, would have given no information, would have avoided a camp of Ferengies as they would the pestilence. But the Garasmatch in charge of the escort sent his men to the villages and these returned with a half dozen tall, silent mountaineers; to be our scouts and guides in the quest for ibex upon the stupendous heights of that dizzy terrain.

After leaving Davart the caravan climbed steadily. Davart is slightly under nine thousand feet above the sea and our camp at the foot of Geech mountain in the Simien was just twelve. That whole northern world sloped gradually skyward and then—the continent of Africa apparently came to an abrupt end: The northern face of Geech, Ambarass, Bwahit and their giant brothers—thirteen and fourteen thousand feet high—fell away, down everlastingly until the hot haze of the low-

## Savage Abyssinia

lands eight to ten thousand feet below, shimmering and vibrating in the tropic sun, engulfed those tremendous buttresses of solid rock and hid their bases from view. As far as the eye could follow to the north and west the panorama unfolded; a chaos of Bad Lands on a Titanic scale; an inferno of cut and broken cliffs, canyons, detached pyramids, ranges, solitary mountains, hog's backs, turrets, castellated towers, abutments, watercourses—and all so far below that the mind was staggered by the utter tremendousness of the scene. It is inspiring, that view—perhaps as inspiring as any outlook in the world. There is but one word that fits the picture—God-awful!

To one standing upon those heights and gazing down—forever down—comes some faint realization of the age of the world. What insane, mighty forces have here been at work and through what countless ages! And what a monstrous accomplishment of natural forces!

The stupendous cliffs, carved from the living rock by the action of fire and water, earthquake and volcano, look as if they might have been planned originally by the Master Builder for use as the massive foundations of the continent, but since had been cast aside as too unwieldy, too colossal for the base of a single continent and were piled there as something more appropriate from which to fashion

## Ibex on the Heights of Simien

a new nethermost Hell. And far below—more than a mile, almost straight down,—dimly showing through the haze, villages, the round grass roofs appearing like thatched dwellings of wild elves, were clustered upon the tops of butte and mountain, natural pyramid and volcanic cone; a topsy-turvy world in miniature whose isolated denizens, marooned through the ages had long forgotten the world by whom they were forgot.

But the thing is beyond words—it cannot be described—and so—to the *Walia ibex*:

The native scouts, lean, rangy, low-voiced men, a little sullen I thought, were not encouraging in their reports. Yes, there were plenty of *Walia* but—could *Ferengies* negotiate the steep cliffs, the shelving rock, the awful brinks necessary to come within range of those master climbers? Frankly, they doubted it, and, it is only fair to say—so did we after one look at the country.

“There is nothing like this,” said *Suydam Cutting*, “in the ibex ranges of the *Thian Shan* of Central Asia. Or, in fact, in the *Himalayas* themselves, that I saw. Nothing to compare to the sudden drops, the sheer cliffs and narrow ledges.”

The *Simien* scouts were the finest hunters we had met in *Abyssinia*, or anywhere in the world, for that matter; keen of eye, absolutely fearless upon the ledges—and tireless. Up and down they forged

## Savage Abyssinia

ahead all day, bareheaded beneath the tropic sun, barefooted upon the sharp lava, silent, alert and with marvelous judgment in the selection of routes over dangerous country. But—being unfamiliar with guns—they had no conception of ranges. And at first when ibex were sighted at half a mile they could not understand why we refused to shoot.

The first afternoon I went out with F'yeesa Boolgoo, gunbearer, Tichanu, a Simien scout and his two sons. Tichanu, to the horror of myself and Boolgoo, kept to the very edge of a two thousand foot cliff, now looking over, bare feet seeming to cling to the ground like the suckers of a devil fish, now slipping ahead, silently scanning the jutting points of rock for possible game. He was tireless and the most fearless man I've ever seen on the ragged edge of sheer space. Boolgoo and I skirted the chasm some twenty feet above the drop, giving ourselves a chance to grasp stunted bush or tuft of grass if we should slip.

"Kufanoo," Boolgoo exclaimed time and again, "kufanoo multo." Bad, very bad. I agreed with him absolutely: It was certainly the most difficult place to hunt I had ever seen. Mountain sheep hunting in the Rockies compared to hunting the Walia ibex was a pleasant pastime for ponderous people.

We picked our way along the cliffs, at times de-



## Ibex on the Heights of Simien

scending a chute or chimney a short way to another ledge. This was scary work—at least for me—where the man below would place the foot of the one above in position.

Finally, the scout who had been a short way ahead, came crawling back:

“Walia! Walia!” he whispered, his breath labored from climbing in the twelve thousand foot atmosphere.

We followed, working our way out upon a jutting point that gave view of the face of the immense cliff below. There, about six hundred yards to the right and a hundred below, upon the narrowest imaginable ledge, a mere wrinkle upon the sheer side of the rock wall, stood two Walia ibex.

The native was intensely eager and urged me to shoot at once. He knew nothing of the limitations of a gun and supposed I could hit them at that distance. I wouldn't have shot if they had been within range for a shot animal from that position would have hurtled at least two thousand feet, bumped on a narrow ledge, bounced off a jutting rock or two and ended up three thousand feet lower—a ruined specimen. We were after ibex, whole and in a fair state of repair; not, “a rag and a bone and a hank of hair.”

The ibex saw us presently—there was no possible approach to within shooting range—and the way

## Savage Abyssinia

they went around that sheer cliff made my hair stand on end. The footing was simply too precarious, from a human standpoint, to have permitted a man, if he could have arrived at their position by some miraculous means, to walk, edging one foot after the other and with arms outstretched along the wall. But the Walia went along at a lope, a short, jerky, goat-like skip it was. They took an almost perpendicular rock obstruction twenty feet high in two bounds—they seemed to “flow” up that rock, around a curve and out of sight. It was late, nothing more was in sight and we returned to camp—F’yeesa and I awed and impressed tremendously with the difficulties before us. If the Field Museum was to have its group of Walia ibex, Bailey, Cutting and I had dangerous and heart-breaking work cut out for us, work that would take weeks, perhaps two months to accomplish.

And in the evening, near camp, the sight of a small herd apparently at ease on the face of a cliff that looked from a distance, slick as a window pane, filled us with apprehensions: Would we ever be able to get within shooting distance of such animal flies? There was little talk around camp that first night. The idea of procuring a group of Walia, males, females and young, appeared almost out of the question and we agreed that if we were lucky enough to shoot one or two and retrieve them in



A LANDMARK TO CARAVANS



TREMENDOUS SIMIEN ESCARPMENT—RANGE OF THE WALIA IBEX



## Ibex on the Heights of Simien

good condition without breaking our own necks in the operation we would be too fortunate for words.

But the next morning Bailey killed a young male and his men, Allamayu and a Simien scout, retrieved the skin intact, although when shot, the animal had fallen over a precipice that Bailey would not even consider attempting to descend. At that stage of the hunt Walia of any age or sex were desirable, for the group must contain ibex of practically all ages; fawns, does, young males and big rams, so any animal that could be secured was highly desirable. But the next that Bailey shot, another young male, went over a two thousand foot cliff and was still falling when last seen. Even the usually undaunted Simien natives could not get to him: They shook black heads as they looked over. It was one of the many impossible places and that specimen was never recovered.

I managed to kill three males that day but the largest, an old ram, at the last shot took a plunge that sent him over a sheer wall into the abyss below. We could not even see where he landed. But the others, were brought back by the natives—at the risk of their necks.

Tichanu had spotted two ibex on the side of a deep abyss and from their direction of travel knew just about where they would cross a certain chasm. He led the way down one of the steepest ridges I

## Savage Abyssinia

ever saw. I hope never again to go down such a place! But the tufts of grass were strongly rooted and together with outcropping rocks gave a firm handhold; I could ease the weight off my feet, get a new foothold and go on. If it had not been for the bunch grass and jutting rocks the place would have been out of the question.

Just before we arrived at a point where the ridge ended in space, the native, a short way below, hissed back. By his excitement I knew the game was in sight if not within range. Then a dark, slaty brown back shot past under a ledge. The animal was circling a black fissure between rock walls so narrow, straight-sided and deep that its bottom was hidden from view. The excitement of the moment led me to jump ahead to a rocky point where a better view could be had—after it was over I looked at the place and was amazed to think that I had taken it on the jump. I would not have done it again faster than a crawl for anything!

The first ibex rounded the fissure and bounded along a ledge on the other side within a hundred yards. Behind him came the second. At the shot the leader seemed to crumple up like a bird killed on the wing. He touched the side of the straight rock wall as he fell, glanced off and, turning over and over in the air, disappeared into the black depths of the cleft between the cliffs.

[ 300 ]



## Ibex on the Heights of Simien

The second ibex, seeing his partner disappear, ran up to the place from which he had fallen, stopped just a split second to look over, and was off again along the trail. The next bullet stopped, but did not finish him. He tottered forward badly hit but might have kept his feet and gotten around a point of rocks out of sight. The third shot sent him careering over the brink. The natives got down to them—how they ever did it I have no idea, I could not get within sight of the bottom without taking chances that appeared extremely hazardous—and found them within twenty feet of each other, dead. They were young males about three or four years old with small horns but good for the museum group.

Boolgoo, who was by that time a first class skinner, was helped down by the Simien natives. He skinned the specimens and the heads and hides were carried to camp.

Tichanu and I went further along the cliffs on the lookout for a large male. And we found one. But this time luck was against us and I missed the first two shots—when he was in a place where he could have been recovered—only connecting with the third and fourth shots when the big animal had reached the very brink of a frightful chasm. He stumbled—fell—rolled toward the edge, almost stopped and—hoofs describing a half circle in the

## Savage Abyssinia

air, went over and out of sight. The first step, or possible lodging place, was two thousand feet below. He had missed that and we never saw where he landed in the maze of sheer rock walls far beneath. Even Tichanu gave him up and when Tichanu said "mongaht yellum"—there is no trail—that ended it with me, for Tichanu could come as near to achieving the impossible in mountaineering—in my opinion—as any man alive; he was uncanny in his ability to skirt those awesome cliffs and pick his precarious way through perilous places. Never have I seen anything like that man's cool ability!

The next morning Tichanu arrived in camp about daylight with his two sons. He had a special place in mind and was eager to be off. With F'yeesa carrying the Springfield we set out. The two boys were sent ahead, along the giant escarpment to the right. They were to climb down to jutting peninsulas of rock and scout for game from those points of vantage, while we walked along the top bound for a certain cliff. The boys were to make sure that we passed up nothing on the way and to save us the heart-breaking work of climbing up and down along the line of travel.

It was about ten o'clock in the morning by the time we arrived in the vicinity of the cliff, our objective. Both boys had come back several times and reported nothing in sight. Then, as we neared the

## Ibex on the Heights of Simien

precipice the youngest boy screamed, in a high falsetto:

“Walia! Walia!”

There, on the extreme edge of the sheer rock wall bounded three ibex; two grown females and a fawn. In collecting family groups of animals the young are most difficult to get. They have a way of disappearing and they are much the hardest to hit. I wanted to make sure of that fawn first.

Before the Springfield could be brought to bear, however, the ibex had ducked over the cliff out of sight. We ran to the edge and peered over, lying flat on our faces.

“Tolo, tolo!”—quick, quick! Tichanu urged as he spied them jumping down a point of rocks that was almost perpendicular. I opened up, aiming low to avoid overshooting on such an incline. But the jerky jumps and the eccentric stops and go-aheads of the fawn were too much—they passed under an overhanging cliff; all three hasty shots had been misses.

We waited and watched for them to reappear further along. We saw them after a long wait. They had gone to the bottom of the small, offshoot canyon, crossed and were bounding up the other side, quartering away from us, too far to offer any reasonable expectation of hitting but I wanted that fawn badly—you are never sure of a fawn

## Savage Abyssinia

with your group until you have the skin in camp.

"Might as well burn up a few shells and take a chance," I thought, and started to build a regular barrage around them. At the third or fourth shot the fawn fell, rolled over and lay still. At the sixth shot one of the does went down, kicked and lay apparently dead. The other doe continued uninjured; the gun was empty. It was luck, pure luck at that range with the animals on the run.

Tichanu and his sons swarmed down a narrow chimney, ran along a ledge, scrambled down a point, and almost broke their necks getting over. Arrived at the dead fawn, they set up the usual chant of victory; a weird, wild, Abyssinian song, extolling the merits of the hunter, the hardihood of the game, its speed and cunning and wariness; the words an impromptu creation of their own. Every Abyssinian I hunted with went into ecstasies when anything was killed.

But the grown female was not dead. When they approached she jumped up and ran along the ledge. She couldn't go fast, being badly wounded, and they followed so closely that I dared not shoot again. After a short chase Tichanu circled her—got ahead—and immediately the ibex went straight for the cliff.

"Now she'll plunge over," I thought, "and go clear to the bottom."

## Ibex on the Heights of Simien

But ibex, it seems, could find footing where it appeared nothing but a fly could walk. She went down an incline between two huge boulders—a place so steep that she slid on her tail part of the way, with front feet braced, holding back. She landed safely on a narrow ledge, followed that a short way until it came to an abrupt end against a sheer, jutting rock. There she was cornered.

Tichanu and one of his sons had followed along the top and now stood directly over the animal. She saw them, gave a searching look down, evidently calculating the chances of a try at the ledge below. She decided instantly—and jumped. Had she been in full possession of her strength I think she could have made it. As it was, she fell short a foot or two, struck a slick wall of rock, rolled over and over and fell perhaps three hundred feet to the next ledge, where she lay, right on the edge, dead.

It was impossible to get to that ledge without wings. It extended but a short way in either direction and nothing on legs could climb from the top down or up from the bottom, fifteen hundred feet below.

But Tichanu and his boys set to work. They gathered all the large rocks in the vicinity and piled them up as nearly straight above the ibex as they could and then began heaving them one by one over

## Savage Abyssinia

the edge of the precipice. Several times they had to go back to gather more but after a half hour's work one rock, the size of a large bowling ball, hit the dead animal and knocked it over the edge.

The carcass turned somersault after somersault through the air and crashed on the rocky bed of the canyon. Down Tichanu and his sons swarmed by a roundabout way and that wild chant floated up from the depths of the canyon.

It took me an hour to descend but I found the skin, while scuffed badly, was in fair condition, well worth saving. About every bone in the animal's body had been broken by the fall.

Large herds of Gellada baboons range along the Simien cliffs and escarpments where ibex are found. They are fine, handsome monkeys, weighing when full grown, somewhere in the neighborhood of seventy pounds. The natives say that Gelladas often act as sentinels for the ibex, giving the short, sharp bark of warning when danger approaches. However this be, Gelladas and ibex are frequently seen together. Bailey almost lost a chance at ibex because of the proximity of a troupe of Gelladas.

Bailey's scout, Demurka, had descended the cliffs a quarter of a mile on the lookout for ibex. He came back and reported a small bunch about a half mile below the rim, feeding in a place that he said was accessible. Bailey and his gun bearer,





THE LITTLE DOG FACED BABOON



A THICK-BILLED RAVEN



GUREZA MONKEY



BIG MALE GELLADA



## Ibex on the Heights of Simien

Allamayu, followed. The descent for the first five hundred feet was steep but could be made easily enough because of the tough bunch grass that gave firm handholds. But beyond that, the earth fell away abruptly, it was straight rock wall, perpendicular as the side of a battleship for perhaps another five hundred feet, when a second steep, grassy slope like the one above, appeared.

The Simien native negotiated the straight wall by means of a narrow chute, or smooth channel in the rock where a cataract of water poured during the rainy season. The seams in the rock were slightly worn here by the action of water; foot and handholds could be found. Bailey's notes say:

"Demurka went down ahead and Allamayu and I, scared as we were, followed. A crumbling foothold would have meant a plunge of at least five hundred feet. It was terrifying, that narrow chute, and I would never have done it unless I'd known that ibex were just beyond. With game almost in sight you do things you'd never think of doing on a cold collar. And I would certainly never have started the descent in the first place if I had seen the whole thing at once. You know how it is: You think 'well, here's a bad place for a few steps but over that the rest will be easier.' In this case it didn't get easier as we went along. But once halfway I hated to turn back."

## Savage Abyssinia

The herd was feeding quietly with a big company of watchful Galladas when they arrived within shooting distance and Bailey saw nothing but young males, females and a couple of fawns were in the bunch. There were no big heads.

Knowing the usual difficulty in getting a fawn, he made sure of the little one first and as the herd jumped away at the shot, secured a fine female. Both animals fell, fortunately, in places where the scout and Allamayu could get at them and bring back the skins:

"They slid and tumbled, rolled and plunged," the notes continue, "until they reached a sheer drop. Over they went, head over heels, out of sight. I never expected to see those specimens again. But Demurka found a way down by a roundabout series of rock chutes, shelves and small canyons. He and Allamayu went through the toughest places I ever hope to see. I couldn't follow—that's all there was to it. Any one wearing shoes would have taken the big drop into eternity in a dozen different places. You can talk all you want about professional climbers in the Alps with their heavy hob-nailed shoes. They wouldn't have had a chance with those two barefooted Abyssinians! Why, they use toes almost as well as fingers to grip with. Hob-nails on that slick rock—I hate to think of it!"

Allamayu, who had carried Bailey's gun for the

## Ibex on the Heights of Simien

past six months was, by that time, an expert skinner, like my boy, Boolgoo. And the two specimens were brought into camp shortly after my two arrived. That gave us two does, two fawns and three young males. The group was complete, with the exception of a big male, by the fourth day. This was nothing short of phenomenal luck.

We had come with supplies for six weeks expecting to spend at least a month before completing the group. But big males with heavy horns, large and old enough to head such a group are scarce. They are wise and wary oldtimers, skilled in the business of preserving their lives—or they never would live to grow the great horns we wanted—for leopards are frequent visitors upon the high ledges, Walia meat is sweet and juicy and the spotted cats are great climbers.

But a word here about Gellada baboons: Easily the handsomest of the monkey family, they are found nowhere in the world but upon the highlands of Abyssinia. Coming north from Gondar we had purchased four young Gelladas alive from natives. A baby dog-faced baboon had been caught months before at the Hawash river camp and was by that time a highly entertaining if not respected member of the expedition. One evening a native came into camp leading a fine young female Gellada. He wanted to sell her for ten dollars Abyssinian.

## Savage Abyssinia

"Hyfelligum,"—we don't want it, we said, just as a starter. Bargaining with Abyssinians is like trading horses with a professional; it saves delay to start like that. In a few minutes we had traded three cartridges, the ancient kind carried by our zebanias, and had acquired another Gellada. The baboon roster then stood:

One dog-faced female, about six months old, called Tinnish—tiny.

Three Gelladas, males, about one year old—Solomon, Shifta and Tolo.

Two Gelladas, females, about ten months old—Negusta Izeb, or The Queen of Sheba, and the new one, not yet named.

The Gelladas were light brown in color with fine silky hair, beautiful monkeys, tame and gentle. But the dog-faced was thin haired, somewhat unattractive and motheaten in appearance.

Zuleka, a twelve year old homeless boy, who followed our camel caravan out of Hawash, months earlier, had been allowed to come along with the understanding that his position would be that of "monkey-wrangler," or tender. At first, when we had but one, Zuleka and Tinnish would curl up together at night for mutual warmth and comfort. But now there were too many and Zuleka tied them under a small canvas, threw a saddle blanket over the closely packed, furry mass, and let it go at that.



## Ibex on the Heights of Simien

Mornings they were turned loose and for ten or fifteen minutes camp was in an uproar; a cloud of baby baboons darted in and out of tents, under cots, swung on tent ropes, chased each other all over the place and finally settled down to eat the tender shoots of green grass.

By the time the mules were loaded the monks were caught and each was tied upon a mule's pack with plenty of rope to allow him to promenade around the hurricane deck. They were always placed on different mules, however. Two on the same animal would have been sure to get into a rumpus and stampede the mule.

It was a sight to see them perched upon the packs holding tightly when the caravan set out in the morning. And when two monkey-mules passed closely, what a wrangling set up! The monkey jockeys berated each other like truck drivers meeting in a narrow street; but the mules got used to such cussings. It relieved the monkeys' feelings, and the men got no end of entertainment out of it.

The Queen of Sheba, Negusta Izeb, a dainty little thing, had a crush on Tolo. When camp was made and the monks were taken off the packs, she ran, hotfoot, over to Tolo, threw arms around his neck, licked his face and talked baby talk by the yard. Tolo received those expressions of endearment as became one in his assured social position.

## Savage Abyssinia

Wrapped in dignity, arms crossed over his stomach, a bored expression on his face, he waited patiently until she finished.

Meanwhile, Shifta, the comedian, a born clown if ever there was one, would make a run at the nearest, grab him around the neck and over and over they rolled. Shifta, brigand, could not be still a moment. And would not let the others be quiet. When he saw one contentedly pulling up grass roots and eating young shoots, down he came like the Assyrian wolf on the fold; all over that monkey like a pan of milk from a top shelf; wrestling, tackling, cuffing—all in fun, there was not a mean bone in his body—but he was rough. And if only he could start a fight he was happy.

Shifta was sitting out in the center of camp one afternoon, balanced precariously on a rock, eating a piece of native bread donated by one of the boys. A big brown kite, one of the commonest and boldest of the Abyssinian hawks, swooped down from behind, went by his head like a bullet, seized the bread in strong talons and “zoomed” up again. Shifta tumbled off the rock, looked around on the ground to see where his meal had gone, couldn’t find it and climbed back on the rock. It had happened so quickly that he didn’t know what it was all about. We gave him some more bread and left him alone. Down swooped the hawk again, took it neatly out

## Ibex on the Heights of Simien

of his paws and was away in the twinkling of an eye. This time Shifta saw the bird and the most comical expression came over his face. But only for an instant. He didn't propose to be made a fool of alone. In a bee line he made for morose old Solomon, seized the string around Solomon's hips used as a tie, and dragged that monkey like a rag doll all over camp, cuffing, mauling and giving him a regular Swedish massage; all in fun.

But Solomon, the serious, hated such childish exuberance. He was a monkey with a name to live up to and seemed to know it. His usual attitude was halfway between that of a pompous, dignified old codger, discussing the affairs of the nation at the corner grocery, and the morose bearing of a confirmed dyspeptic with a secret sin. He loathed play in any form. But when Shifta started he was in an embarrassing position. If he fought he merely prolonged the unpleasantness. If he took it meekly he got a trouncing. For days he was completely at a loss what to do. Then he figured out a way to put a stop to such rough play, without the discomfort of a pitched battle:

When Shifta came down on him all spraddled out, he whirled on the brigand like an avenger, seized a double handful of fur, but suddenly seemed to notice something. Before Shifta could make a move, wise old Solomon started industriously going

## Savage Abyssinia

over Shifta's pelt on the trail of an imaginary flea! Shifta immediately dropped all idea of a frolic, and stood perfectly still while Solomon hunted the intruder. In a moment Shifta had forgotten all about the mauling he intended to administer and romped away after one of the others. It was exactly as if Solomon, when attacked, had whirled on his adversary with:

"I'll fix you,—you blankety blank bla—whoa! just a moment, well, as I live and breathe—if here isn't one of those things crawling through your hair!"

But the little dog-face, by this time experienced in life on the trail and in camp, became a confirmed and clever thief. He spent most of his time near the cook's fire, sitting up with front paws dangling, the picture of innocence. When the cook's back was turned the scamp made a quick reach—appropriated bread or whatever happened to be handiest, stuffed it in his mouth and re-assumed his position of studied innocence. He was far too clever to be seen chewing in such a compromising position, but, with cheeks distended, calmly sauntered, without haste, behind a tent where he consumed his stolen food at leisure; then back again he marched sedately to his old position by the fire.\*

\* The five Gelladas stood the sea voyage home in good shape. They have been presented to the New Zoo in River-view Park at Chicago.

## CHAPTER XV

### HUNTING THE BIG RAM

**M**EANWHILE, Bailey and Cutting had added several more fine ibex specimens to the collection. We now had eleven, all in excellent condition. But—so far the big fellows had eluded us. An ibex group without one or two old rams would have been a sorry thing. We *must* have at least one noble old fellow with ancient knotty horns. We explained this to the scouts and told them we were no longer interested in any but the largest males—the larger the better. But they answered at once that the old males did not range in the locality we had been hunting; that the big Walia could not be killed by Ferengies:

“Ferengies cannot go where the largest Walia range. None but a native raised upon the ledges of Simien can negotiate the sheer cliffs where the old rams have their stamping ground. You would fall and be killed. We will not take you there for if anything happens to you the Dejasmach Ayalu will hold us responsible and we should be put in chains. No, we will never take you into those dangerous places.”



## Savage Abyssinia

We called the Garasmatch that Ayalu had sent along as guard, told him we had come for big ibex, intended to get them and unless he wanted us to hunt alone, he must compel the scouts to take us where the big ones ranged.

"I have a better plan," he answered, "there are two or three hunters here who can get them for you. I'll give them guns and send them out. All you have to do is to wait here in camp. In a few days they will return with what you want. White men could never go into those awful places—worse country than any you have yet hunted."

We didn't see how anything could be worse than the great cliffs we had been hunting—but again, as we had with the Dejasmatch, we repeated our determination to do our own shooting, explaining that although museum collectors first, we were still, we hoped, sportsmen enough to bag our own game: a resolution he could not understand. It took an hour's strenuous argument before he came 'round and ordered the scouts to take us where we were determined to go.

Bailey had a narrow escape the next day. With his scout, Demurka and Allamayu, gunbearer, he sighted a small herd far below feeding along a narrow ledge. Cliffs perpendicular as the side of a building fell away. Another wall of rock almost as sheer, rose above the grazing animals. It was



## Hunting the Big Ram

fully an hour's risky work to climb down to the ledge and to follow along on the same level with the game.

Cautiously Bailey was picking his way. A loose stone sent plunging over the edge of the abyss from the narrow ledge would alarm the watchful quarry and the game would be up. He went ahead very slowly, for the footing was precarious and a misstep meant utter destruction. Foot by foot Bailey worked his way around the ledge—and then—a rattling clicking noise—the sound of hoofs on hard rock, came from around a point directly ahead. The Walia were on the move. Looking up, he saw a fine ram climbing the almost perpendicular face of the cliff, not over fifty feet above—almost directly above. Bailey's notes tell the story:

“The ram was climbing what appeared to be a straight wall, quartering upward. How he found footing is a mystery; I don't understand it. It was a dangerous feat even for an ibex and his whole attention was so concentrated upon his work that he did not see us. He was so close I couldn't miss, but there was one thing I forgot to figure on—his line of fall. I shot, breaking his neck. The ram crumpled—and down the cliff he came, rolling, plunging with the velocity of an express train, for the wall was so sheer he barely touched as he fell.

## Savage Abyssinia

He was almost directly overhead. We had no time to dodge—and to move quickly on that narrow precipice would have been fatal anyway. The ledge where I stood was not more than three feet wide and over the edge the drop was two thousand at least! It was all over before I had time fully to grasp the peril of the situation. The heavy animal—dead—lunged by in a shower of loose rock and gravel. He didn't miss me four feet. I stood perfectly still, not daring to move. It was a close call. He would have knocked me into eternity without the shadow of a doubt if his line of fall had been a few feet—perhaps inches, closer."

The ram was badly broken up by the fall. He lodged two thousand feet below and when they got down by a roundabout way they found the skull smashed, one horn cracked, every bone in the animal's body broken but—as we found to be often the case—the skin not badly scuffed, split in one place, but the specimen could be made into a perfectly good mount; for modern methods of taxidermy can do wonders. He was big and unless a better was secured, would do nicely to head the group. But one a little larger was highly desirable.

The next morning, my scout, Tichanu, with his two sons, arrived in camp before daylight. This was to be a hunt for another, and if possible, larger male.

## Hunting the Big Ram

"We must go a long way," Tichanu announced through the shivering interpreter—it is bitter cold nights, on Simien, and it was not yet daylight—"you must take a blanket. We'll camp up among the ledges and peaks. Maybe so one, two, three nights."

We took food for three days, a blanket apiece, matches, a small teapot and cups. F'yeesa, who had carried my gun for the past six months and was an excellent skinner, was to go along. As we started, Birhano, the six foot Mohammedan mule packer, who had been with us since we had been in Abyssinia, joined the party of his own accord.

"Hey, Birhano," I said, "where are you going? You're no hunter."

"I will go too," the interpreter translated the answer of the big Mussulman. "I go among the cliffs. I know the steep, dangerous places. I will be of service to gaytah"—master.

Now Birhano was one of our best men. The quietest, decentest, calmest of them all. I had taken him hunting but once before. His job was packing mules. But I had often thought that, in a tight place, I would rather have Birhano along than any of the others. And, that morning, his quiet, determined manner rather made a hit too—so I said: "All right. Come on."

Tichanu and his sons led the way toward the

## Savage Abyssinia

highest part of that section of the great Simien plateau, a bold headland that thrusts itself over thirteen thousand feet into the sky. Dawn was breaking: That most commonplace phenomenon in all nature, but one that never loses its mysterious charm and its strange power to lift the spirit from its grubby prison of clay. The cold peaks, pale and massive, loomed ahead, gigantic, silent: Lonely sentinels standing through the ages, unchanged and unchanging—watching, unmoved, the races of men and animals come and go upon the face of the Planet.

In that thirty mile long series of immense cliffs, almost bottomless abysses and gigantic escarpments, was but one possible descent to the bottom—eight or ten thousand feet below. We were to strike this, go down two thousand feet—just below the first cliff—and then turn to the right along the wilderness of narrow ledges, shelving canyon walls and steep terraces that extend for miles along the face of the escarpment: For there lies the range of the big ibex.

From the reluctance of the Garasmach, Tichanu and the other scouts, to let us go into this region I was fully braced and prepared to see a terrain bewildering and staggering in its roughness; a country difficult in the extreme. But the sight that lay open to view when we came out upon a volcanic

## Hunting the Big Ram

dike at the base of the first cliff was beyond anything I had imagined!

By this time the morning sun was lighting up the valley of the Takkazzee river below. The Takkazzee here runs about four thousand feet above sea level. We stood upon a point at least eleven thousand. For the most part, the drop was a series of perpendicular walls, of two and three thousand feet each, separated by ledges, shelves and miniature grassy terraces of frightful steepness.

"Can such a place be the range of any animal sound in mind?" I thought. "And, if so—can any man, no matter how goat-footed, pick his way through that torn and ravaged area?"

Tichanu struck off to the right following a ledge that wound around the base of the cliff:

"Mongaht mellifano," he said—good trail—pointing a mile ahead to where a narrow ibex trail evidently passed between two immense rock spires. "Yellum kufanoo"—not bad.

In all truth if I could have withdrawn then and saved my face, I would have done it. And if I had known how much of that day's climb was to be worse—how many times we were to skirt cliffs of unknown height where feet must be placed in position by the man ahead, and a single tuft of bunch grass simply *had* to hold, or one of us would have gone down into the abyss—I would most certainly



## Savage Abyssinia

never have attempted the thing! But it was as Bailey had said a few days before:

"You come to a bad place and think that once over this, the rest will be easy. If you had any idea how many bad places there were and could see them all at once, you'd be horrified; you'd never start. But once started, you hate to quit."

That day shall always stand out in my memory. Many times Birhano, the big Mohammedan, made good on his quiet remark, "I know the steep, dangerous places. I will be of service to gaytah." Sometimes, skirting a point of crumbling rock that jutted out over space, heart thumping—not from altitude—I noticed that Birhano, taking an extra, unnecessary chance, traveled directly below me, one hand raised upward toward my back ready instantly to hold me tight against the wall if foot should slip or handhold give way. Ah, Birhano, you were a tower of strength, that day. May your tribe increase!

A small bunch of ibex were seen late in the afternoon, too far away to reach before dark, but we could make out with the glass a big male with the long, curving horns we wanted. He would have been a wonderful specimen to head the group. We watched them feeding along a shelving ledge and then sought a place to camp for the night. We had



## Hunting the Big Ram

hopes of finding them somewhere in the vicinity in the early morning.

Just before dark we camped—that is, spread blankets and built a fire beneath an overhanging rock on a ledge about eight feet wide. It was a sheltered spot, and although very cold before morning at that altitude, it was not so frigid as it might have been. A huge abyss yawned beneath. Its bottom was hidden in the shadows. The great cliff, two thousand feet or more towered and overhung above. A maze of peaks, cliffs, scaurs and rock spires lay ahead. The darkness fell suddenly, the deep shadows lending a haunted air to the place. But the tiny fire of stunted cedar burned cheerily and the men talked in whispers. We made tea, had our supper and rolled up, each in his single blanket.

A little after midnight the cold, sharp and biting on that narrow ledge at eleven thousand feet, woke me up. The five Abyssinians were sleeping quietly and the tiny fire had died out. A million stars were blazing in the firmament, gleaming through the rarefied atmosphere with a brilliancy not seen at lower levels. A late moon bathed the opposite cliff in pale, washy light and the canyon below was a lake filled to the brim with inky blackness. There was no wind and the absolute silence of the high peaks was unlike anything of the kind I had ever

## Savage Abyssinia

noticed before; that high world was so still, so spectral with its giant rock cliffs and buttresses, that it gave one the feeling of being a visitor upon a distant, dead planet.

Just before daylight we lit a small fire, cooked breakfast and when the sun showed upon the rock wall overhead, set out following the same ledge to the right. But that comfortable, eight foot shelf upon which we had camped for the night soon petered out. A sort of track, made by ibex in their peregrinations back and forth among the peaks led on around a point of rock that hung out over space. It was another of those places that to me appeared entirely too risky to cross. Tichanu and his sons did not hesitate. But they did wait for Birhano, Boolgoo and myself in several particularly bad spots, showed us where to place our feet and which rocky handholds to trust. Had I known of that trail the evening before, it would have interfered with the night's rest.

The going then became somewhat better. The ibex trail branched out upon a steep terrace, grassy and wide, and entered a scattered growth of tree heath or stunted, cedar-like brush that somehow clung to the slope. There we stopped to look ahead through the glasses.

Suddenly, a rock rolled down from a ledge and went crashing through the brush to the sheer drop

## Hunting the Big Ram

of the canyon! We jumped up! A big ibex ram was just disappearing into the brush, having been upon the ledge about fifty yards above and, seeing us, had leaped down from ledge to ledge to the wider terrace at our level, dislodging the rock.

There were several bare ridges in the direction he had taken and I ran to a higher point to watch for him. But the old fellow was wise or the route he took by chance was fortunate, for he did not appear again until, like a dark brown streak, he dashed across a bare ridge fully three hundred yards away. It was too far for a running shot and a hit without a great deal of luck. The day was young and a shot would have disturbed any game within a couple of miles. I did not shoot.

Tichanu and his sons, unfamiliar with firearms, thought that all I had to do was to point the weapon in the direction of game, no matter how far away, pull the trigger and go up and count the dead. They were much disappointed. Boolgoo, who had been present upon former occasions when I had happened to connect on long, lucky shots, also thought it was a mistake to let that ibex get away without a shot. Birhano said nothing but grinned confidently, as if to say that he was sure I knew what I was doing.

We had not gone more than a half mile further before Tichanu, who had been some distance below,

## Savage Abyssinia

perched upon an eerie lookout with the glasses, came scrambling back:

“Walia! Walia! Tidlik!” Ibex! Ibex! Big one! And his arms went over his head, bending backward to illustrate the curve of the big horns.

Down we went to Tichanu’s rocky perch. On hands and knees we crawled to the edge of that jutting rock and peered over into space. There, after some pointing by Tichanu, I could make out four ibex standing upon a rock shelf, a sloping ledge about twenty feet wide with boulders and broken rock upon it: The ibex were so nearly the same brownish, weather-stained color of the rocks that I could not make them out for a minute or two. Then, through the glasses, I saw the big fellow—the “tidlik” Tichanu had mentioned. He was standing apart from the others, motionless, as if listening intently. They were much too far away to have heard us and we were high above them. Tichanu, of course, motioned hysterically for me to shoot at once.

The range was between three hundred and fifty and four hundred yards at the most optimistic estimate and from our position I would have to shoot down at an angle of forty-five degrees. I had no intention of taking such an outside chance if there was any possible way of getting closer. I explained this to Tichanu by signs and a few Amharic words.

## Hunting the Big Ram

Even Boolgoo, who was a decided bull upon my shooting, shook his head.

"Yellum,"—no—he said laconically, "rukinoo,"—very far.

Indeed, as I looked again I thought the big ibex was nearer five than four hundred yards away.

We studied the lay of the land. From our position we could see no way of descent. We could not follow along the level we were on and come directly above them, for a sheer wall rose almost to the clouds on that side. Tichanu glided away. In five minutes he was back:

"Mongaht yellum,"—there is no trail, he said, "kufu, kufanoo," very bad. When Tichanu called anything very bad—that ended it for me.

Peering over that rock, I could see the big Walia's horns through the glasses. With the naked eye he was distinguishable from the others only by his isolated position and his blocky size. I took the Springfield from Boolgoo and sighted tentatively. The fine front sight more than covered the entire animal at that distance. I laid the gun down. No, I could never hit him. It was simply too far. There must be some way of approach. Tichanu was sent again to find a way down. But he returned with the same answer:

"There is no way."

I tried to determine how much the Springfield



## Savage Abyssinia

bullet would drop in four hundred yards, shooting down at an angle of forty-five degrees. Perhaps half the distance it would if shooting on the level, I thought. Therefore, the gun, if held properly for a two hundred yard shot would hit the mark. I decided to make the try: There was nothing else to do.

Lying flat on the big rock with the gun resting in open palm, head and shoulders hanging over space—but with Boolgoo and the faithful Birhano each holding an ankle—and Tichanu holding his breath tense as wire at the breaking point—I squeezed the trigger slowly and very, very gently—and missed!

At the shot, a puff of rock dust, the tiniest imaginable cloud at the distance, flew up just over the big fellow's back. But it was enough. I had overshot. The bullet, apparently, had not dropped an inch at that sharp angle. Another shell went into the barrel. The ibex was now, of course, on the jump. But he had some little distance to go before he would be out of sight. At the second shot, this time with a fine sight, he flinched, stumbled, recovered himself—and we knew he was badly hit. The third shot was a miss, and now the big ram had reached the edge of a steep slide. In two more jumps he would be over and out of sight. The fourth shot was hasty—it had to be—but it took him through the top of the shoulder and ranged forward and down through the



## Hunting the Big Ram

brisket. He collapsed as if struck by lightning. His legs caved—relaxed as wet cloths—he hit the rock slide, rolled over three or four times, struck a boulder, caromed off into space, turned over and over endways a dozen times and came in contact with the rock wall that was almost, but not quite, perpendicular, rolled, spun, bounced and crashed through jutting rocks and narrow shelves and lodged on a ledge six or seven hundred feet below. Tichanu, shaking with excitement, rushed over and planted a kiss on my cheek!

His two sons, who had been several yards off to the side, danced and raised the usual wild song of victory!

Boolgoo grabbed my left hand and almost shook me over the edge of the rock.

Birhano, the silent, smiled—beamed is a better word—and said softly—so very softly—“melifiano—melifiano, gaytah”—good, good, master.

There was more pleasure for me in the antics of the Abyssinians when game was killed than in the realization of a lucky shot. Their wholehearted and unbounded joy, sincere and naïve, always gave me no end of a thrill. Any one who has hunted over fine setters will know what I mean.

The specimen, in spite of the fall, was not badly injured. And the horns were just what we wanted for the big male of the museum group; massive,

## Savage Abyssinia

wrinkled, long, and showing signs of great age.

It took us just one hour and three quarters to get down to the ram by a tortuous, roundabout, and, at times, dangerous course, while one of Tichanu's sons remained behind to roll stones down to keep the "amora," the vultures, away.

Arriving in camp with game and, as in this instance, with game of the most desirable kind, is always an event. The gunbearers and scouts, primed with the Abyssinian love of the dramatic, proud of their work and filled with a boyish spirit of "show-off," usually paraded into camp after a successful hunt with a martial tread, heads up and backs straight as ramrods.

Boolgoo, Birhano and the scout, Tichanu, and his sons insisted that we stop a minute just over the hill from camp. I was dog-tired, hungry and thirsty. In fact, I had just about reached the state of exhaustion where legs no longer seem to swing from the hips, but you walk from the ankles down in a kind of loose shuffle, the next thing to the stumbling, weaving stage. It had been man-killing work getting that hide and heavy head to the top of the great escarpment. There had been many—far too many—dangerous places to pass and the day, taking it all the way through, had been the hardest I ever put in. All I was thinking of was camp, supper, bed.

But not so the boys. No matter how tired they



THE SUDAN BORDER AT LAST



THE AUTHOR AND BIRIHANO WITH IBEX



## Hunting the Big Ram

were, they would never, for a moment, miss such an opportunity for heroics. We stopped behind the hill. Tichanu arranged the skin of the big ibex, draping it artistically around his shoulders. The thick, heavy, knotted horns rose high above his head and the hoofs, those marvelous, rubbery hoofs that cling to rock walls with unbelievable tenacity, swung almost to the ground. Boolgoo adjusted the Springfield at a rakish angle; that light, hard-hitting weapon which he cleaned, polished and oiled incessantly, and called affectionately, "tinnish shaitan,"—the little devil. The big Mohammedan undid his turban, re-arranged it and settled his ancient cartridge belt more to his liking and we went on.

As we topped the hill, the men in camp dropped whatever they were doing at the instant and rushed forward in a body. This was the thing my boys lived for! How straight they marched and how hard they tried to look the part of conquering heroes! But wide grins spoiled the set expressions of grim determination they affected.

But it was a very successful home-coming, taken by and large. The Walia group was complete. The men were eager to leave that high, cold country and we were perfectly willing to bid good-by to those tremendous, sheer cliffs.

With thirteen excellent specimens of Walia ibex,

## Savage Abyssinia

secured in just seven days' hunting upon the high peaks of Simien, we broke camp and set out upon the long march to the Sudan border.

The mountain nyala, secured months earlier upon the southern trip, and the Walia ibex, had been the two main reasons for the organization of the expedition. We had thirty-eight hundred specimens in all, including birds and small mammals. We had been in Abyssinia almost seven months and had traveled by mule and camel caravan, in the neighborhood of two thousand miles. The trip had been a great success from every standpoint.

There is much that might be told of the journey west to Gallabat in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, Khartoum, civilization. The extraordinary luck that had been ours throughout the trip held to the last. Osgood and Fuertes, from whom we had not heard in two months, after parting at Bichana, in Gojjam, had passed along the west side of Lake Tsana and we met but three days' trek from the Sudan border. It was a most fortunate meeting and a big and joyful surprise to both parties. They, too, had been highly successful.

The last half of the three weeks' journey from Simien to the Sudan border was a period of anxiety. The wide country of the Barruhouns had to be traversed and the Barruhoun brothers were on the warpath with five hundred followers: It was a



## Hunting the Big Ram

force capable of playing havoc with us and our valuable specimens. The whole region had been burned. Great bush fires had destroyed every vestige of grass and the Barruhouns were raiding, stealing cattle, burning villages and having a general good time; for boys will be boys. Fortunately, we avoided an encounter and arrived at the border with specimens and outfit intact.

It is perhaps impossible for one who has not journeyed through a wild and barbarous country to understand the feeling of relief and satisfaction that comes when at last you draw rein before the first fortified outpost of government and see the bright flag of a civilized nation whipping in the breeze overhead. You know then that your specimens are safe; that you have arrived in a country where justice is administered according to the principles of Anglo-Saxon fair dealing. Where brigands, shiftas and burners of villages are captured forthwith, given a fair trail—and shot. Where the local Shum, or village chief, although he may possess a little power, does not dare to lay hand upon his neighbor without just cause and, miraculous to state, cannot even take away the crops and cattle of his defenseless people: In a word—where a man, be he ever so weak and poor, is given a square deal and his “missus and the kids” are safe!

After all, there are few things in this world as

## Hunting the Big Ram

desirable as Anglo-Saxon justice and fair dealing, be it dictated by Britain or America—the principles are the same: There is nothing so well calculated to drive home this truth as a long journey in a land where those principles are not in force.

## NAMES OF ABYSSINIAN ANIMALS

ENGLISH	SCIENTIFIC	AMHARIC
Elephant . . . . .	<i>Elephas africanus</i> . . . . .	Zóhon
Lion . . . . .	<i>Felis leo</i> . . . . .	Ambassá
Greater kudu . . . . .	<i>Strepsiceros strepsiceros</i> . . . . .	Argázin
Lesser kudu . . . . .	<i>Strepsiceros imberbis</i> . . . . .	Gódir
Zebra . . . . .	<i>Equus grevyi</i> . . . . .	Maydah hyah
Leopard . . . . .	<i>Felis pardus</i> . . . . .	Nebur
Hyena . . . . .	<i>Crocuta crocuta</i> . . . . .	Jeeb
Ibex . . . . .	<i>Capra walia</i> . . . . .	Wália
Nyala . . . . .	<i>Tragelephus buxtoni</i> . . . . .	Argazin
Klipspringer . . . . .	<i>Oreotragus saltatrixoides</i> . . . . .	Sūs
Duiker . . . . .	<i>Cephalophus abyssinicus</i> . . . . .	Medōka
Baboon . . . . .	<i>Papio doguera</i> . . . . .	Jingáro
Gellada baboon . . . . .	<i>Theropithecus</i> . . . . .	Gellāda
Wart hog . . . . .	<i>Phacochoerus africanus</i> . . . . .	Carcáro
Bushpig . . . . .	<i>Potamachorus hassama</i> . . . . .	Ássam
Jackal . . . . .	<i>Canis</i> . . . . .	Kabáro
Abyssinian red wolf . . . . .	<i>Canis simensis</i> . . . . .	Tidlik kabáro
Oryx . . . . .	<i>Oryx gallarum</i> . . . . .	Sälla
Crocodile . . . . .	<i>Crocodiles</i> . . . . .	Sandóo
Common gray monkey . . . . .	<i>Cercopithecus æthiops</i> . . . . .	Tōta
Guereza monkey . . . . .	<i>Colobus gallarum</i> . . . . .	Guréza
Buffalo . . . . .	<i>Syncerus caffer æquinoctialis</i> . . . . .	Gōsh

## Savage Abyssinia

Oribi .....	<i>Ourebia gallarum</i> .....	Fáyko
Hartebeest ...	<i>Bubalis swaynei</i> .....	Worôbo
Dik-dik .....	<i>Madoqua</i> .....	Iíchu
Roan antelope.	<i>Hippotragus equinus bakeri</i> ..	Wónderbee
Waterbuck ...	<i>Kobus defassa</i> .....	Defässa
Soemerring's gazelle .....	<i>Gazella soemerringi</i> .....	Anjúba
Reedbuck ....	<i>Redunka bohor</i> .....	Bóhor
Bushbuck ....	<i>Tragelephus meneliki</i> .....	Ducôla
Francolin ....	<i>Francolinus</i> .....	Quawk
Guinea .....	<i>Numida</i> .....	Jígera
Rock hyrax ..	<i>Procarria</i> .....	Shikôko
Hippopotamus.	<i>Hippopotamus amphibius</i> .....	Gomáro

[336]



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